The Hudson Review

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Notes on Contributors

RICHARD EBERHART has been appointed Professor of English at Dartmouth. A new book of his poems will appear in 1957 from Chatto & Windus in London and Oxford University Press, New York.

SONYA RUDIKOFF is travelling in Europe this summer, and is at work on a novel and some critical essays.

HUBERT CREEKMORE is completing his fourth novel, "The Wilderness." His translations are from a collection of 40 Provencal poems which he has put into English.

KENNETH BURKE is now doing final work on a *Symbolic of Motives*. His *Counter-Statement* and *Permanence and Change* (reissued, revised, by Hermes Publications in 1953 and 1954 respectively), are to appear in the Phoenix Series of Paperbooks (Univ. of Chicago Press); and his *Philosophy of Literary Form* is to be reissued in Knopf's Vintage series.

The Minute: and Longer Poems, a new book of verse by JOHN HOLLOWAY, is to be published in England in November.

IRVING SINGER is now an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Michigan.

The essay by JOSEPH KERMAN is from his book, *Opera as Drama*, to be published this fall by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

WILLIAM MEREDITH is Lecturer in English at Connecticut College.

JOHN LOGAN is visiting professor of English at Coe College this summer; he wrote a second book of verse this year.

WILLIAM BECKER continues to work with Roger Stevens in real estate finance and theatrical production. He has recently been deeply involved in the Stevenson campaign.

LOUIS SIMPSON is an instructor in English at Columbia; his *Good News of Death and Other Poems* is reviewed in this issue.

ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS will be on leave from Cornell this next year.

HERBERT GOLD'S novel, *The Man Who Was Not With It* (Atlantic-Little, Brown), was published last winter.

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RICHARD EBERHART

The Kite

I

Putting the Thing Together. It is Going to be Five Feet Tall

It is in the shape of a cross, homuncular.
Unroll the kite. The sticks are in the center.
The bridle stick, bridle, and control lines
Are wrapped together.

Attach spar to mast.
Use machine screw, washers and wing nut.
The spar should be at the front of the mast,
The bowing line extending across the back.

Next is the bowing of the spar
To impart lateral stability to the kite.
Tauten to nine inches from cross axis to top;
Less makes unsteady; more
Spills too much wind around the sides.

Three ways have been devised,
The button-slide, the anchor-lift,
The button-lift. Whichever to elect,
Like violin-string the wind will play it.

Attach the cover; each corner
Has both a cringle-tape and a boltrope loop.
Insert these together in the long slot
Which is across the width of the spar-end.
The tape will keep the cover from "creeping."

Tighten the boltrope; pull the top ends tight
To produce a taut outline to the kite,
But not so tight as to bend the mast.
Ends brought together, pass them under
The large washer, lain in the same direction
As the twist of the wing nut.

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Attach fin. Insert lug in slot,
Secure with machine screw. Enough on that.
If the pintle is of the bent-wire type
Engage all four gudgeons before seating the fin in the slot.
The rudder must be separated from the fin
Before removal of the pintle in order to fit the tiller in.

Insert the screweyes in the spar so that
The tiller-cord must be forced in, will not easily come out.
The direction taken by the cord through the screweyes
Must be in line with its motion.
Put mid-section of control cords into spar-eyes.

Adjustments, of which there are eight.
There are proper balances and angles for steady flight.
Four items are on the rear of the kite,
And there are four on the front.

The bowing-gap, of which we have spoken.
The boltrope taut and secure is next.
If the boltrope is not taut, the fabric is slack.
A tight kite flies fast; speed in manoeuvres is essential.
Give the hem of the kite a thump
Testing the boltrope tension with a finger.

Connections secure is third. Twist
Wingnuts to make sure they are tight,
Spar at right angles to the mast.
Unless the spar is truly square
One half of the kite, asymmetrical with the other,
Will give an out-of-line condition.

On the front, check knots and snaps for security,
Bridle and tiller lines for kinks or bends.
The proper bridling angle is sixth.
The difference of an inch in the bridle point
Can seriously impair the ability of a kite to fly.

The peak of the bridle line, at
The center connection of the bridle stick,
Should come to a point two inches below the end of the spar.
If this does not check, loosen the larkshead
Connection by which the bridle is wrapped around the stick,
Lengthen or shorten, pull the connection tight, recheck.

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The behavior of the kite in the air
Often will indicate any bridling fault.
If it porpoises, undulating flatly,
The bridling is too high; if it sits squarely
To the line and refuses to rise to an efficient angle,
The bridling is probably too low.

Changes in bridling should not be too abrupt.
Often a shift of half an inch
Will make the necessary connection.
Usually, two inches under the spar is correct.

Seventh, aligning the control cords.
Hold backward and upward on the bridle stick,
The kite on the ground, your foot on the mast top;
Bring tension on both ends of the bridle.

With the bridle stick horizontal,
Adjust buttons in the tiller lines,
The rudder to be in a straight line with the fin.
Now reduce the tension in the side cords

The load of the kite's pull coming on the bridle,
Not on the control lines; these tense only
For smooth and free action of the rudder.
Rock the bridle stick
For free action of the rudder. Rock it.

Last, lines free and clear for the take off.
The bridle stick will weave around the lines,
Or the lines will foul on the rudder,
Unless you prevent it; stow the bridle stick
Between boltrope and mast, until ready.

These are the directions,
But a certain freedom of motion
Will be your contribution.

Variations invite you
In the luxury of your intention.
You are off for ancient flight.

Within the limits of a principle
You are to be the sky's disciple
Floating on the air metropolitan.

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II

Sensitivity of the First Flight

Your blood has coursed and rushed with anticipation.
You have also studied the ratcheted wheels of the reel,
Invested yourself in the rig of the parachute-like harness,
Learned bowline, fisherman's bend, four-strand overhand,
    larkshead loop.
Already many times tangled in the winding drums
You have exercised exegetical practice on the lines,
Threaded and rethreaded spanwise the spreader bar,
If need be with a twig or straw, by the sea's edge.

III

Theory

Not like that example showing the absolute mastery of
    nature
So that if there is wind enough to lift the lovely shape
The same wind turning a vane at the fore
Turns with remitted motion a rudder at the rear,
So back and forth, to right and left, across the sky
Steered by its own motion, the sail must go

With a low, long undulation of precision
Standing into the sky with a sublime indifference
And regularity to the whims that may destroy it,
As if it were its own theory and reason for being
Freely the agent of its own pleasing exercise,
Imperturbable before the wind's perturbation,
Nicety, balance and ease of operation; as if
There were order in the universe; as if
Order were in the mind of man,
But as everything is fixed to something
So this air-engine, in an access of cleverness,
Itself moving in azimuth or elevation
Is fixed to light metal rods in the shape of an A,
This fixation the more to unfix our earthless emblem,
For the wind that keeps aloft the sail
And equally sails it slowly to and fro,
The vane being attached by linen cords to the A,
Also deftly marches it on the surface of the ocean,

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This free and faultless thing then is a target,
Can be launched from cruiser or battleship,
Will make a deflection target for air gunnery,
Can be shot at by different ships in passing,
The metal floats so cunningly devised
That upon destruction in the air by gunfire,
Or descent of the sail for lack of air-power,
A change of weights and balances opens small holes,
The sea rushes in, the whole engine sinks from sight
Leaving no trace to enemies upon the broad Pacific,
As a dream kept long alive, aloft, in night thoughts
Suddenly disappears from the mind beyond any call.

To be a flier of kites is not the least of my desires!
In this you see the symbol of your relation to the universe;
The wind, unseen, is God, upon which all is dependent,
Sometimes absent, sometimes present, always possible,
In time. The sail, whether in guise of cerulean
Blue make, undistinguishable at a distance from the sky,
Or almost so, as you are from nothingness, in time,
Or almost so, is soul or spirit, yours,
Which you release to flight, which seems to be free,
But over which you hold manoeuverability
Yet it is nothing without the Author of its motion;
Or dotted like a Hamp, a Tony, a Rufe, or Nan
Its suns of rising redness set before the sun's gold eye,
Held thus in the sky to be a mask, the sign of evil,
And save your eye from the true sun's all-inclusiveness,
Else dazzling you, the sun not truly masked,
You lose control, all's gone in a second to wreckage.

If you would look into the sun, put something before it,
Put the mask of evil before it if you can.

Or say the sky is the father-mother symbol, the
Wind is the generator, the lines umbilical,
And you the kite: Fly high, fly low, luff
Or porpoise, or buckle, or break your bonds,
Whether destroyed in the ocean, or destroyed on the sand,
You are not lost, but a part of the world's plan.

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It is the sperm searching the great womb of the sky,
Restless with creative energy, flirting with eternity,
Attempting the gift of itself beyond itself,
Dying upon the very air that holds it up,
Pulled down by the harness and the reel.
So our thoughts would transcend themselves
But they are limited to the human.
So our souls would unite with God,
But they are imprisoned by the body.
And our intelligences ever at great play
Assume a certain lightness through the years!
Our wills finally respond to the controls
Of infinite forces as viewless as the wind.

IV

The First Flight, and Later

Then you carry the great thing down to the sea,
To the sand by the sea, harnessed, weighted with gear,
Your helper-launcher eager as you.
In a basket an extra spool of linen string,
A knife, pliers, broad Scotch tape, and a metal box
Brimful of buttons, screweyes, nuts and bolts, the hardware:
You are the wind's guesser, a neophyte of this element
Searching a distant flagpole, or smoke, or leaves swishing.

With care the bowing is accomplished, all conditions
According to the book are fulfilled, she stands
Taut and singing and a living thing.
On the broad beach, with gulls and hawks playing
And far above airplanes making other curvets
Now the helper walks with it backward
Two hundred feet as you reel out the double lines,
Your hand on the reel-brake to keep the lines taut.
Then holding it up as the arms will,
The helper obliterated by the enormous emblem before,
You test the lines for equal tension,
With horizontal motion of the flying bar
Flap the rudder, when all is ready
As you think, and you are all wary, signal "Up Sail."

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Straight up with grace incomparable rising
To high center the kite goes sailing and shining.
In your heart and in your hands are triumph.
Long care you have exercised, long patience,
And you think you have cunning.
Such contending as this is in the unpredictable.
The high quiring! Classless you are clumsy,
In a trice it loops over and crashes down,
Instantly inert; broken on the beach.

Quickly dashed this sail, delicate as sensation.

Inspecting the wreckage, you search the cause.
Was it lack of knowledge, or the wind's cantankerous veer?
Then you excise the broken spar, put in a spare,
Make with greater caution and wariness another attempt.

The second time she goes up ten feet
Whirls over and is dashed to pieces in sand.
Again you make necessary repairs,
Baffled by the testy, bluffy bird.

The flier will practice by the hour, and achieve
Slowly the relaxed ease of his controlling motions,
Slowly he will learn the habits of the sail's tactics,
And soon respects the grandeur of the wind's potentiality.

With diligence, the hours flying away in exhilaration
The flier will learn the secret of anticipation
So that the unforeseeable future of the kite's motion
Is the guide of the present instant's motivation;
Unless this is accomplished disaster is imminent!

Then the dominating shape, sturdy in the sky,
Well-weathered and living in its keen nature,
Responsive to the controlled will of the flier
Will be seen to make slow arcs across
The sky's quarter, or hover far over into
The wind, slowly descending, or will rush
Up bright to high center, or be compelled
Crabwise across to its last inch of wind-take,
Or perform complete circles to right or left,

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Or dazzle the eye in a spectacular figure eight,
Lastly even diving from zenith to,
Almost to earth! reseated upward
Even ten feet before seeming crash to earth
By dexterous, subtle motion of the flying bar!

Much depends upon how much throat you give it,
How it will fly. The slightest adjustment
Of the larkshead loop, will tell. What I call
Open-throated rides against the wind,
Is best in a thirty knot wind for power dives,
But close-throated turns less face to the wind,
Rides more nearly atop it, is gentle sailing,
But that it comes almost overhead porpoising
Which, then, compels correction.

It is possible to dispense with the reel,
To go with no harness, by primitive means
For a flight, having constructed a stick,
Even a broomstick, as a flying bar,
One linen line attached to each end,
The strings wound around as on a bobbin.
This gives for quicker action than the other,
The kite is harder to control, more adventuresome to fly,
Will outhand you in an instant
If you are not continuously concentrating;
Is hard to bring in, but with lucky skill
Can be landed by a forward rush to drop it.

V

The Wind as an Abstract God

Every day one looks for the signs of the wind,
Which has now become a living thing, obsessive,
Thought of in terms of sail-lifting pleasure,
A rustle in the holly trees; will it be
Enough? The flag is always indicating,
At the Cavalier. Often in excess of elan
You have tromped all your gear down to the beach
In the anticipation of eight knots, or
Taken the smooth seven-footer that will sail in six,

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Its pale blue cover to go slowly and stately,
But by this token it is also less manoeuverable.

Your knowledge of the wind was faulty, and even
Though there is wind at the edges of the waves
Your helper lifts aloft, and you reel in hard,
But the kite will not rise, falling, unbroken.

The fascination of the thing is in the wind!

Sometimes sailing, the kite well exercising,
The wind will drop, and nothing can be done
Nothing, nothing.
You go, with all your gear, reluctant, home.

And you had learned obedience to nature,
Desirous man, had learned obedience to nature,
Before you sulked home with your sticks and fabrics.

VI

Adventure on Sunday

By the seashore, by the Hotel Splendide
When days were on the flame, but lessening
And would not kill the skin with stings,

But far enough away, quite far away,
But by the house that read "No Trespassing,"
Not once, but each ten feet upon the jetty,

That house that held a terrible old lady
Whom Furies drove to such a loneliness
She picked up sticks upon the sand all day,

By dawn, and equally in amber evening
She'd rake the sand for any obstacles
But sand, by hand, upon her eminent domain,

Yet dawn the sea dragged in obstreperous foray
And night would overwhelm her restless energy
With wreckage, sea's greenery, a lungfish, a great booby.

Then retreating farther down the beach
In an access of politic prehension,
A pontiff wind available, you come

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To the tasks of assembly and adjustment,
Of balancing, and testing, and pre-correction,
To attempt the launching of the vane alone.

By resting the sail on its side on the sand
It is possible to run out the lines, then even them
And reel in until pressure brings it edge up.

Then with swift reel-in off she takes
Laterally and if adroitly handled evenly
Crabs across up and soon seeks high center.

The wind now ardent, you reel out
Letting the wind take it, back, until flapping,
Then put on the brakes to tauten it up.

Then let her go again in opulence of motion
The plane growing smaller, shrinking bright,
And still you let it out, and out, and out,

Noting the gradual slowing of the controls,
The time-lapse in the reaction of the strings
As these gleam deep, in deep unequal curves

Flashing white against the blue, but lost far up.
And you are strong in a springy disrelation
Almost divorced from the plane you control.

It must be almost over the Hotel Splendide!
It must be out almost two hundred yards.
It is tugging on the harness, lustily,

When, pong! the plane loops down under
In a huge circle, comes up, loops over,
Begins another descent, you reel in, run back,

She barely comes up, she goes up over,
Something has snapped, you try for control,
She goes way down under, the thing is giddy,

You barely get her up, each circle losing
Altitude, is altogether behaving crazily,
You reel in frantically. O way down

She goes, she has gone way way down
Out of sight behind the terrible lady's house,
Both lines are hung up over the roof.

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It would be the "No Trespassing" house!
Friends come; all assess the situation.
Strangers appear, gazing at the strange gear.

It is not an inconsiderable problem,
The lines are caught hard on the roof. Will
Anybody appear, from the house? You seriously care.

Eventually a sort of council of war.
Actually a calculation of strategy
Upon an attempt at the extravagant.

Another five-footer is put together.
Will the wind hold? Will it work?
Every effort to free the lines has failed.

The reel is wound in to the edge of the lot,
The lines just taut to the top of the roof.
The new kite is held by its delicate bridle,

Each end of the bridle secured to a reel-line
And the idea is to fly the fouled lines off!
"Up Sail." Up she goes heavy and cranky

Carrying the burden of the lines beyond her,
Seeming to refuse, but rising queerly,
Now at the housetop, and now higher rising

The stuck lines are lifted gently away
The useful kite then steered to the beach,
Landed safely to the delight of beholders.

Before which the Jap was thrashing around in the parking lot,
Illogical plaything of partial-fitting wind,
Restrained by dead lines fixed to the roof.

High in air, a tiller-line snapped out a spar eyelet.

VII
Aerialism

A whole day of sailing is delight!
Or a day of intermittent sailing and lazing,
For you can find a cove among the dunes

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Back a distance from the surf's gift,
In broad view of the expansive Atlantic,
For the repair of kites, or rest between ventures,
With friends, or alone. All day the wind tussles,
Or sometimes it will sink for an hour,
Or rise puffy: there, shielded, on tan grass
Pointed inland by months of wind-rush,
You study the texture of the sail's make,
Rig the lines, attend to checks and balances,
Repair a rent with Scotch tape, barefoot.

To sail by the sea pleases inly
When the wind comes onto the shore
In great staves like music
Playing against your muscles to the orchestrated,
Intricately shifting movements of the vane.
Then it is to test the far-out motion,
Facing to the South, to fly the lines over,
To fly the kite out over the ocean,
Four hundred feet out, say, the wind
Sagging the lines between you and it,
So that there is a certain peril in the control
By time-lapse; also the edge of the wind
May endanger, by lack of its steadiness,
The intrusive tactic into the wind.

By now tipped over, the mast almost horizontal,
You edge it up wind as far as it will go,
With skill try to keep it motionless and still,
Then, with a sense of shearing the minimum,
By forcing it just to horizontal, O be deft,
Down almost to the very touch of the waves
You love to let it.

If disaster results, you rush to the scene,
Try to catch the swamped bird on the in-come,
It must be caught before the last breaker
For the last breaker invariably breaks it up.

Then another attempt of similar aviation.
This time more safely not over the ocean,

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You try, by the same minute hand motions,
Trying to gauge errors of the wind's differential,
To land the kite upwind on the beach.
Often like the most skittery bird,
Impatient as a spirit, an earthless thing,
"Light as the wind," the lithe being of the kite
Will dance with an enthralling delicacy,
Just at the touch, or less than touch, of the sand,
Straining and quivering to be up, flirting,
A creature of the completest absence of mind,
An elemental spirit, soul of the graceful.

Then a practiced hand, tightening the controls,
Can bring the full vigor of upward compulsion.

Evening flight makes evening an advancer,
Too soon an all darkener. But you stand there

When you can hardly see what you are doing,
O metaphysical adventure!

Until the moon arises,
And you can mask it.

O strange and impalpable evanescence
To be flying by the light of the moon,
With dark-adapted eyes, but uncertain
At any instant what your relation
To the sail is, or how to maintain it,

As it is always with us and reality,
In the eccentric heart of philosophy,

Surely this supposition of control
Yet without certainty of the control

Is where nature has us,
And we have set our minds

For centuries up in the heavens
Where they fly, secreted, dark,

Riding on the winds of chance.

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SONYA RUDIKOFF

Feminism Reconsidered

SPEAKING of Virginia Woolf in 1941, E. M. Forster wondered whether her feminism was not old-fashioned, and he called *Three Guineas* "cantankerous." That book, published in 1938, has often irritated its readers; most people prefer the more "charming" *A Room of One's Own*. Forster did, but he also thought young women would know best whether their "situation" still required Mrs. Woolf's "grumbling." Fifteen years later Forster's uncertainty might be answered simply by the spate of books about women which publishers think necessary to provide. To judge from the books alone, "women" seem to present even more questions than before the war, although, as everyone knows, most of the feminist goals are largely realized. Women can vote, hold office, travel alone, testify in court, own property, go to law school, enter most professions, get divorces, and so on. Yet today many women feel powerless—which may seem surprising to the men of our society who often feel instead that it is *they* who have become powerless. This reversal would in itself be confusing enough, but there is another complication: Queen Victoria urged women to stop "this mad, wicked folly of Women's Rights with all its attendant horrors, on which my poor feeble sex is bent"; ironic, this hardly ingenuous appeal coming from the most powerful woman in the world. What is most curious today is that some women want to be more royalist than the Queen.

Perhaps militant feminism lost its momentum once its claims were granted; and, at the same time, a strict egalitarianism revealed certain insufficiencies. There was no feminist platform that made transitions easier or quickened cultural lags, and it was in just those shadowy areas that the feminist ideals often proved inadequate. But the reaction against those ideals was not a discrete, self-contained phenomenon. A whole congeries of other sentiments formed at the same time, to become one of our most pervasive modern attitudes: a species of social pastoral. I have in mind the modern feeling for static, stratified, "closed" societies, the respect for Tradition, the wary and often contemptuous view of "mar-

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ginal" people and "alienation." One hears of how dangerous life's discontinuities may be; that social forms such as the ghetto, the plantation, and the village community produced more integrated, more stable personalities than our modern urban living can do; and that social mobility is a kind of disaster. This is *not* nostalgia, for, in most cases, the feeling refers to a life that was never experienced. Those who speak of the contemporary *déracinés* are often themselves rootless by choice; the ancestors of some neo-conservatives might not have been Burke's friend but rather his valet or pawn-broker; and if actually offered the efficiently stratified societies of the past, with *all* their characteristics, most people would reject them. Still, *the choice need not be made;* this puts us in a curious relation to those images of wholeness, consonance, and coherence. Modern life with its irregularities, its discontinuities, its ambiguities—all its qualities expressed in dissonant latinate words—seems only irritating and disordered beside some picture of the craft guild, the patriarchal family, the South before The War, Europe before the Industrial Revolution, England before the Reform Bill—and women before Women's Rights. It is in such an atmosphere that the contemporary revulsion against feminism finds its place ideologically. Taken together, the drift of these sentiments may make us wonder why modern images of the good life are turned so entirely from the future, and why visions of harmony refer much more to "what has been" than to "what might be." To raise this question may itself seem to some people a gaucherie.

Feminism was, of course, not thoroughly routed; some militants stayed on the ramparts long after the enemy surrendered, and they may be found in quite unexpected quarters. The name may seem strange in this context, but Dr. Kinsey is such a one, or so it seems from a reading of his report on women's sexual behavior.[1] His study might have been delayed if psychology had not provided a climate of opinion, and perhaps the public would not have welcomed his findings as they do; but it is quite impossible to imagine the fate of an interest in women's sexual behavior without the precipitating encouragement and support provided by feminism.

[1] *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, by Alfred C. Kinsey *et al.* W. B. Saunders Company. $8.00.

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Those early suffragettes might not themselves have been so interested in sex, but the goals were votes, jobs, and freedom; and sex became a part of freedom. Our society chose to repress its knowledge of women's sexuality, so that the serious study of it seemed an adventurous discovery, and in some quarters still does. The authors of the Kinsey Reports are certainly pioneers in the breadth of their work; but they also treat the whole subject of sexual behavior as their new-found land. In particular, their tone in this second Report suggests that they think of themselves as lone defenders of women's right to have "a sex life."

The first of these studies, as everyone will recall, provoked serious criticism on many grounds; similar criticism can be made of the second one. The authors continue to be more interested in the range of sexual behavior than in the quality of it; the same maximum importance is accorded to numerical instances of overt acts; and one may notice the same—but more guarded—hostility to aspects of sexual experience which cannot be measured by the methods adopted. Generalizations derived from the behavior of 5940 "females" still need infinite correction and qualification; and many critics would find the authors not yet sufficiently concerned about the questions such a sample raises for their findings. The interviewing techniques, and other aspects of the method, still need consideration, and the fact that the author's tendentiousness has abated only a little will please some readers and alienate others.

More than a quarter of this second Report is devoted to material on anatomical, psychological, neural, physiological, and hormonal factors in sexual response. This material is not taken from the famous interviews, but comes from scholarly publications in the various fields. It has no complement in the earlier Report. The question of sex differences hangs over *this* book like a cloud until we come to these last chapters, when it becomes the true subject of the inquiry; and Dr. Kinsey's contribution also indicates a major difference between the two Reports.

Whatever the specific sexual activity, whatever aspect of it or age-group may be considered, the sexual behavior of women is *not* exactly like that of men, despite women's emancipation. If this seems an old truism, it has nevertheless rarely been investigated so elaborately. The authors examine certain factors which influ-

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ence sexual response, and, as a result, much of the reader's confusion is dissipated. For, they have repeatedly told the reader, in this Report as well as in the other, that ideas about "sexual drive," or "libido," or desire, were too mystical. If any of us believe that Eros seeks something, is active in pursuing it, "*had, having, and in quest to have, extreme,*" we are, it seems, hopelessly unscientific as well as obstinate. But, now the reader can understand why such ideas were disdained; for, in the discussion of psychological factors in sexual response, the authors tell us about sex as a matter of conditioned stimulus and response alone. Pavlov and his dog make their expected appearance, and there are statements about the variety of things to which any human being can be conditioned. Curiously enough, as soon as the authors present their psychological prototype, they go on to ignore its most important aspect—that is, the dog's desire for food. The dog could hardly have been conditioned without it, no matter what complexities develop later. But human beings can apparently be conditioned without anything except their capacity to respond to stimuli. Thus, it turns out that women are even lower than dogs, because in the end they are not very conditionable psychologically. Women are not much interested in the kind of stimuli tabulated here: looking at pornographic pictures, hearing smoke-room stories, talking about sex, watching people undress, or fantasying about specific sexual practices. Women are hardly conditioned by past experience, it seems. Furthermore, conditioning is suggested as the basis of learning, and as basic to human development altogether. The authors profess to believe in women's rights, but, after reading this chapter, one must conclude that women are not human after all.

Did the authors ever question whether a particular *person* was erotically stimulating to these five thousand and more female subjects? Perhaps a whole person would also be considered too mystical a concept and would have to be broken up into separate kinds of stimuli—yet it is well known among women that one "partner" may employ exactly the same stimuli as another "partner" and still produce a different response. Should sado-masochistic stories be considered *more* of a conditioning factor than, say, flattery, which is not named at all? Should being in love, or other moods and psychological states, be ignored as conditioning factors in favor of observing sexual activity and the other stimuli preferred by the

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authors? It is a commonplace that, for women, the will is significantly and intricately involved in sexual response, yet the conditioning of *this* factor is not recognized, nor is its influence mentioned. Unfortunately, questions of this sort involve behavior that cannot be tabulated by the Report's methods and cannot be discussed in terms of its meager psychology.

If, as we are told, an individual is conditioned by previous experience of certain stimuli, then it would be reasonable to investigate the kinds of stimuli to which women may respond *uniquely*. That this is not really done in a study of female sexual behavior is a matter of some interest. Women thus appear less conditioned and less conditionable *because they do not respond as men do*. Later on, the authors suggest that some difference in the cerebral cortex and in hormonal structure may account for this failure. The Report intends to teach tolerance for sexual habits which deviate from the average or the ostensibly normal. Yet surely the one "individual" who appears most bizarre throughout the whole chapter on the psychology of sexual response is the "female" —because she fails to respond to "the ordinary stimuli"!

Stimuli, of course, should produce responses. Sexual behavior is purposive behavior. I think it is of some significance, therefore, that coitus is practically ignored by the Report. This may seem strange indeed. Most people would assume that the book was about nothing else. Nevertheless, this act, which many people consider more important than petting, dreams, animal contacts, masturbation or homosexual practices, is nowhere described or presented. Three chapters, it is true, offer "material" on pre-marital, extra-marital, and marital coitus; the usual graphs and calculations are there, the social, legal, and moral aspects are discussed at length, and coital techniques are considered; but not the phenomenon itself. This is a remarkable omission. The word *coitus* is frequently used, and requires innumerable index entries, but the act denoted by that word is, in the Report, unapproachable, and furthermore, something not recommended very strongly by the authors; they almost seem to "counsel you out of it." On the other hand, masturbation is believed to be "the best index to a female's sexual capacities," and to provide "the most clearly interpretable data . . . on the anatomy and the physiology of the female's sexual response and orgasm." Homosexual techniques are believed to be similarly

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accurate in orgastic efficiency. Then, masturbation and dreams are thought to give the best measure of the female's intrinsic sexuality, because all other "outlets" are not solitary, they involve someone else even if only an animal; sexual acts which involve others do not show anything "intrinsic." It is this conception of sexuality which has seemed such a perversion to many readers of the Report. Still, despite discrepancies in response, the recurrent possibility of dissatisfaction or of pregnancy, "females" continue to engage in coitus; the authors are truly bewildered at some points: according to their view, "females" would have given up coitus long ago.

This bewilderment, and this emphasis on non-coital activities, are the authors' ways of dealing with the clearly observable fact that in coitus men and women behave differently. Also, coitus is the only sexual practice which seems discontinuous with the Report's view of anatomical structure and sexual function. For, the sexual response, in this view, is based on end organs of touch, which are equally distributed in the anatomy of each sex. The external sexual organs are viewed as homologous; tactile and perineal stimulation are thought nearly identical in each sex, as are the stimuli involving the mouth and body surfaces; physiological factors are believed to be the same. The only difference between the sexes, according to the Report, is to be found in the size of the homologous external organs—the male penis, the female clitoris—and in the absence of any internal organs in the male corresponding to the vagina and uterus in the female. But these differences and a few others are considered *negligible* and *of no great significance* in the origins and development of sexual response; they are significant only for reproduction, which, to judge from its absence in this book, has nothing to do with sex at all. The Report also asserts that these anatomical differences have no real significance for orgasm either; the orgasm discussed here is the clitoral orgasm, nearly identical with the physiological and neural event which occurs in the male. The authors deny the existence or sexual importance of the vaginal orgasm, and suggest that any such sensations which have been considered orgastic are merely perineal reflexes or general body convulsions not peculiar to the female at all.

Curiously, this controversy is broached in the chapter on anatomy; it forms no part of the Report's psychological discussions,

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and, like countless other aspects of sexuality, it is not viewed as psychological at all. The vaginal orgasm, in fact, is stated to be a biological impossibility, *a priori*. Those coital experiences which the Report believes have been wrongly termed orgastic are grudgingly recognized to have a certain *subsidiary* psychological importance for *some* women! What this may be, the authors cannot say, but it is neither sexual nor psychological. One wonders how they can judge, if they must dispute the phenomenon itself.

The Report's view of female sexuality is not unexpected, given the authors' anatomical and neurological emphasis, but, whatever the intention, its most striking consequence is the degree to which sexuality has been abstracted: the orgastic pattern which is established is the male pattern; the psychological conditioning understood is the way males may be conditioned; and, finally, the sexual organ is conceived of as the male organ or its homologue. The female, in her sexual behavior, is measured against this view of sexuality, but little attention is given to any unique aspects of women's sexual life—sexual organs which have no homologue in the male, sexual processes like reproduction which have no analogue, sexual sentiments which have no match. Children in their fantasies infer that the interior of the female body has *something* to do with sexuality, but adult investigators find this inference untenable; it does not accord with their view of the "female."

The Report is suffused with a spirit of tolerance and equality and concern for deviants; every form of sexual behavior is considered equally efficient, equally desirable, equally natural. Women are not to be excluded from sexuality, as they have so often been, nor should their capacities be questioned; to insure their rightful status in the sexual world, their behavior is considered to be of interest only when it most nearly approximates male behavior. But this is the idea of equality which, far from assuring women a sexual identity, actually deprives them of it and insults them. For, there is no doubt about the difference between those homologous organs, and to base sexuality on them alone is the quickest way to minimize the sexuality of women. It is indeed a curious thing that the authors should press their belief in the equality of the sexes so far that they are led back to the prototype of the old androcentric argument: their conclusion points to a *defect* in women's capacity to be conditioned psychologically, perhaps some

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insufficiency in the cerebral cortex—something wrong with *The Brain*!

Then, we are prepared for the Report's insistence that human beings of different sexes have no particular sexual need for each other, and that their union in sexual life has no foundation but is only a kind of social or historical formality. Sexual life is merely a mutual friction performed by "individuals" with homologous organs; they are capable of being aroused by any stimuli, but they are more efficiently satisfied alone. Truly, they make a lonely crowd.

Sexual ideas can often be said to imply social ideas. Thus, as a statement about women, the Kinsey Report might be called egalitarian in the extreme. Unsympathetic readers have thought Dr. Kinsey was a harbinger of an ugly future, but his general view seems to be much more anachronistic. For, the Report distills sexuality until sexual differences between men and women are said not to exist ideally, apparent differences being only the product of social pressure and outmoded prejudice. This sexual levelling represents the perversion of the feminist argument; and if the attempt to equalize sexuality results in the impoverishment of sexuality that the Kinsey Report illustrates, then it might be argued that ideals of complete social equality have the same disastrous effect on feminine personality and on all of human life. In such egalitarianism, it seems that the perception of human differences is displaced to another level: women are "identical" with men, but psychologically they are monsters. Still, the displacement and the conclusion are not inevitable. It is possible for feminism to be more sophisticated than the Kinsey Report would suggest. Equality does not really require that human beings be neuterized into mirror images; perhaps only a man might think so—no woman conducted those interviews or wrote up the data.

Simone de Beauvoir addressed herself to the subject of women several years ago, and it is her long ambitious book *The Second Sex*[2] which I have in mind as an example of a more sophisticated feminism. She is lavish with descriptions of those feelings and attitudes which are so important—which the authors of the Kinsey Report didn't consider a part of sexuality at all. In fact, it is the

[2] *The Second Sex*, by Simone de Beauvoir. Alfred A. Knopf. $10.00.

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whole point of this book, how much sexuality *is* involved with life. True, there were many women who found Simone de Beauvoir's picture of women's lives false, and who refused to identify themselves with her examples; but that is somewhat like reading Proust and refusing to see how a grown man could have such feelings about his mother. As everyone knows, Mme de Beauvoir is an existentialist, and, despite her *gaffes*, no fool.

"*Nous aimons les femmes à proportion qu'elles nous sont plus étrangères*," said Baudelaire. Mme de Beauvoir agrees that this has been true, but wonders, Should it be? The "situation" of women is always that of the inessential "Other"; an object, man's prey, a subordinate; different, strange, exciting, or dangerous; but weak, helpless, dependent, and without moral liberty; women are creatures of that dull, purposeless stagnation which Mme de Beauvoir interprets as "immanence"; perhaps they were the first "other-directed" personalities, in Riesman's sense. Feminine acquiescence in this role is really "inauthentic," that is, not the expression of true desire or free choice, but the expediency of the weak. Women have been denied, and deny themselves, the opportunity for "transcendence," which Mme de Beauvoir construes as the liberty of a free subject to pursue a "project"; the recognition and exercise of that liberty would be "authenticity." She challenges sexual alterity at its roots, contrasting the facts and ideology of otherness with an existentialist ethics.

Of course, they are inadequate. Otherness precludes true liberty, and it is Mme de Beauvoir's argument that so long as women consider themselves as other, they cannot be authentic; their lives can be lived out only in "bad faith." The sexual relation itself cannot be free so long as women conceive of themselves as objects; it can only be what Baudelaire sometimes thought it was—"*Il y a dans l'acte de l'amour une grande ressemblance avec la torture ou avec une opération chirurgicale*"—and that will be a paradigm of the social relation also. *It need not be*; that is Mme de Beauvoir's point, which some readers have missed.

The dualism which has taken many forms since civilization began is in almost all cases found repugnant and ethically wrong by Mme de Beauvoir. Whether women represent the race, the blood, the forces of irrationality as against reason and light; whether helpless infants, pure holy beings, undefiled spirit;

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whether only inferior and subordinate—no matter what form the image of women may take, Mme de Beauvoir finds it an example of sado-masochism, and rationally untenable. Kierkegaard, Montherlant, the early Church fathers, Napoleon, D. H. Lawrence, Balzac, St. Thomas, Comte—all those who consider women as the Other may be revealed as predatory. And, obviously, when men define women as this despised or feared object, they will as stringently despise in themselves the traits which the Other displays. There is no doubt that discrete and exclusive sexual identities make demands on men which are quite as severe as those made of women, if not more so.

The conditions which give rise to sexual dualism, however, are not immediately rendered absurd by a rational calculation of costs. It may be quite irrational for men to view women (or women to view themselves) as these strange exotic beings of mysterious attributes, but there is a real question whether such images arise for rational reasons to begin with. Theories of economic subordination are all very well; but what if sado-masochistic relations begin in the human mind, in, say, the primitive growth of the ego, an inevitable fact of human development? The psychological ontogeny of sado-masochism, or of many other relations, is not clarified at the end of Mme de Beauvoir's exercise in applied existentialism.

The fact is that she thinks in much the same kind of dualism. Instead of the traditional sexual polarity, she offers the terms immanence and transcendence, which are quite as discrete as the other terms. Transcendence includes actual activity as well as intellectual, social, political or aesthetic invention; one transcends the mere species in a project, a plan to change the world, an idea; an act *or* an artifact. Immanence is bondage to the species, the repetition of the enslaved who, without choice or possibility passively make themselves means rather than ends. Although Mme de Beauvoir believes transcendence is a *human* goal, it often means *only* what men do. Sometimes, to be an existent, to transcend, *is* to be male; and symmetrically, to be object, other, or immanent *is* to be female. It is not clear whether *all* forms of activity are to be thought real transcendence, or whether apparent passivity is always to be thought immanent, and immanence *always* stagnation. There are activities which show no real transcendence: we sleep,

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dream, wash our faces, waste time, go to cocktail parties, play, browse in bookstores, mope; these may involve no actual projects; and the importance of transcendence for heroic, artistic, and intellectual work is often overestimated by this rational Frenchwoman who ignores the amount of *in*activity so essential for that work. Is true humanness fulfilled only in projects? If so, then immanence becomes a perversion, a shameful dirty weakness.

Two questions arise about this new dualism: do the transcendents regard the remaining immanents—of whatever sex—as objects, as Others, or as "law-making members of a kingdom of ends"? And is it necessary to be biologically male in order to be an existent? For, if all those with projects are to treat the immanents in the way men have been accused of treating women, then little progress will have been made in the sexual quarrel. And if the possibility of transcendence depends ultimately on specific biological equipment, then half of the human race is effectively rendered non-existent.

Ultimately, the question resolves itself into one about the nature of feminine (and masculine) activity and passivity; and, although Mme de Beauvoir's work was intended to be definitive, she has not been able to illuminate the question to any considerable degree. She has the reputation of a wide learning and therefore it comes as a surprise to find so little neutral or objective discussion of the way feminine personality develops; the *actual* process is always treated as an absurdity or a scandal. This Frenchwoman is not at all interested in any theories of primary femininity, that is, of a femininity which is not just the reactive consequence of the castration complex. If transcendence is as natural to women as she would insist it is, then it cannot be only secondary, imitative, a masculine identification, but she declines to investigate other sources of it.

And then her argument has its inevitable, expected conclusion: one of the forms of feminine transcendence which many women find enjoyable is that of bearing and raising children; but in Mme de Beauvoir's hierarchy, this is not transcendence at all, it is in fact the paradigm of immanence; neither activity nor project, nor even—to judge from her descriptions—a pleasure. It offers immense possibilities for bad faith, and apparently none at all for the intact authentic ego.

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Feminism presented in existentialist terms was something new in the history of the controversy, but some people might feel that there is too much philosophy in Mme de Beauvoir's discussion. It seems to me, however, that there is not enough. If one tendency of existentialist thinking is to find *all of human life* absurd and scandalous, then there seems no point in singling out women's lives as especially so; to apply the criteria of freedom and authenticity so exclusively is to suggest that men's lives are *not* absurd, as Mme de Beauvoir often does. As if women alone were visited by an existential misfortune! The possibility that *life itself* may pose insoluble problems must be ignored, then, if the equivalents of moral choice or bondage are so concretely identified. If women become free existents would there be no other evidences of nothingness? Existentialism, however, provides a mode of thought, not a "line": one could as easily find in women's lives the *greatest* opportunities for true existence. Mme de Beauvoir shows how women have countless occasions for exercising their liberty, for "choosing themselves" in their situation; because several kinds of being are available to them women could be said to *exemplify* the problems of existence in a way that could serve as a model for a theory of choice. To *become* autonomous in spite of *being treated* as Other is an experience of existence which most men are denied. That these points are not made indicates just how far Mme de Beauvoir will go with her applied existentialism.

Poignant, compelling, and for the most part accurate; sincere, compassionate, occasionally brilliant, and truly aware of the dangers faced by *les femmes savantes*—one must rate Mme de Beauvoir very high for much of her accomplishment; she values honesty, freedom, the strong ego, and *la carrière ouverte aux talents*. But great confusion surrounds her conception of femininity (and I distinguish between that and "the feminine role"). She is too intelligent to argue for only a cultural explanation of women's "situation," but as her argument proceeds, it becomes evident that she rejects not only this situation and its social disadvantages which might be remedied; she seems to reject as well the biological "situation" which can hardly be changed, and the sexuality which stems from it. She does not become trapped, as the authors of the Kinsey Report do, by forcing female sexuality into a male pattern, but the normative sexuality she proposes is

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a sexuality without motive; what women are to *do* or *want* is a little unclear. One thing they are *not* to want, either consciously or unconsciously, is children, and there are other restrictions. Like the authors of the Kinsey Report, she prefers to consider motherhood as only scandalous and barely incidental to sexuality.

Many women would find it impossible to accept the sexuality she describes as so monstrous, and she herself sees resignation to it as the only practicable solution. But the granting of social claims will hardly mitigate the effects of this basic sexual dissatisfaction, if it is as far-reaching as Mme de Beauvoir's examples indicate. A social inferiority might reinforce resentment or sexual submission, or other related sentiments, but only if a sexual inferiority is assumed initially. And, if so, then *social* equality might not be sufficient to compensate for it. In her explicit statements, Mme de Beauvoir questions the androcentric view of man, who, taking himself as the human norm, finds women strange, defective, inferior, inhuman—the Other. She is right to question it, yet in her descriptive and rhetorical sections, and especially in her prescriptions for the future, she writes as if to be human meant to be male after all, and as if the development of feminine sexuality or feminine life could never provide a primary pleasure. "Who shall say between Man and Woman which is the most delighted?" This existentialist speaks fervently of alienation and its dangers for the ego, yet, for women, her view may represent the greatest alienation of all.

Of course, anybody would choose liberty over bondage! Who would show "bad faith" if she could be authentic? The life in which most choices are made is defined as "ordinary" by this philosopher whose impassioned and infectious rhetoric often becomes dangerously abstract. But life as it is lived will tell us what neither Mme de Beauvoir nor Dr. Kinsey is able to communicate —that is, how much all discussions of the woman question have changed. Reading the existentialist and the taxonomist, one might think that the early feminists were still on the march with the same momentum that sent Mrs. Pankhurst to jail. But if we have any connection at all with life as it is lived, we see that this is not true, at least not in our own country.

Everyone these days knows of at least one Ph.D. given up for

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diapers, nurturing, and home-baked bread. To many younger women, the ideals of feminism no longer have much appeal, and the dedication of the early feminists is thought ludicrous if not downright neurotic. The birth rate confounds the demographers; educated women are reproducing themselves more than anyone would have imagined twenty years ago. There may still be women never affected by feminist ideals, and there are those who continue to fight on in the old terms; but for most educated women the question has changed radically and it may be difficult to know exactly how this happened. Such general statements about what educated people are doing always betray their own inadequacy. And current sentiments about feminism are still intangible; their strength is to be found more in conversation, and in the implications of certain attitudes, than in explicit beliefs. Not that there are no explicit statements—there *are*; and if we find no public feminist issue (like the Hiss case for liberalism) the new ideology about women has certainly crystallized into a single question—that is, whether, and, if so, *how* women should be educated.

A third book about women which came to my attention examines this very question; it is a sociologist's exploration of anti-feminist views on education. My literary readers may not be familiar with *Women in the Modern World: Their Education and Their Dilemmas* by Mirra Komarovsky,[3] but they would be interested to know that, as compared with Dr. Kinsey, and even compared with the humanist, Mme de Beauvoir, the sociologist would seem to be not only reasonably intelligent, but surprisingly even human. It is not what literary people say about sociology nowadays. This discipline, once thought so original and liberating, has come to signify for literary minds the perversion of the mind itself, the very type of the worst kind of modern thinking. Consider how often the word "sociological" stands for that quality which is most destructive of human values, how literary people consistently use it as a word of damnation. . . .

It may seem strange that anyone should *still* question whether higher education is desirable for women, especially after five generations of women have been so educated. But almost daily one may read that education is wasted on women who marry and have

[3] *Women in the Modern World: Their Education and Their Dilemmas*, by Mirra Komarovsky. Little Brown. $4.00.

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children; that it might create false aspirations and make them dissatisfied with their lives and less willing to become that jack-of-all-trades, the housewife and mother. Feminist ideals are thought to constitute an aggression against men and society; and it is often asserted that educated women with their unfulfilled aspirations pass on neuroses to their children, make their husbands unhappy. The presumed increase in mental disturbance is traced to women's emancipation. Instead of being educated for professions or careers, it is suggested, women should be redefined in terms of their traditional roles of wife, mother, and homemaker, and educated to fill these roles. A "distinctively feminine" curriculum is counseled, both for colleges and high schools. Women's education would be heavily weighted on the side of the household arts and the "feminine" fields—conceived either narrowly in terms of home economics and interior decoration, or, more broadly, in terms of those fields of knowledge which center on the family (anthropology, psychology) or which can be of use to the family (music or crafts). "Feminine" values are set up to balance the "masculine" ones: intuition, tenderness, emotional response, altruism, spontaneity, the cherishing and nurturing of life; and aesthetic values are to be thought feminine in themselves and inimical to technology, objectivity, logic, law, abstractions, and the values of a modern industrial civilization. The question of women's education thus becomes a way of dealing with what is really the true subject, the question of women's natures.

Dr. Komarovsky offers an interesting discussion of this. She remarks that it is highly questionable whether women's higher education is responsible for the evil attributed to it; whether, in fact, other aspects of modern society are not more relevant to the character and dilemmas of modern women. Whether the proposed changes would remedy anything is also very difficult to say; they sound more practical than they actually are. Women's lives are often said to be *inevitably* discontinuous, and not women's lives alone. There is also the point—and Dr. Komarovsky does not make it with sufficient force—that education may be a source of pleasure and personal reward at the same time that it involves discontent and discontinuity; indeed, they may be intimately and integrally related (and this is true for men as well). Educated women are always told that they have lost the coherence, the sta-

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bility, and even the sense of identity which presumably characterized their feminine ancestors; but it is never suggested that anything has been gained. Nor is the whole problem of choice or of competing values ever handled adequately in those proposals for a "feminine" curriculum.

Increasingly this view of education becomes itself repugnant and, further, self-defeating. The argument seems to run: Instead of "indoctrinating" women with physics, economics, history, or government, why not "indoctrinate" them with psychology, literature, and the household arts? Philosophy, for example, is suggested for inclusion among the "feminine" fields of knowledge. But surely this is a strange designation for a discipline in which logic and linguistic analysis (ostensibly inimical to femininity) have come to occupy such a prominent place. As for the other "feminine" fields—psychology, anthropology, and so on, all allegedly characterized by their cherishing and healing of society —the social scientist replies that they may disrupt society quite as much as they heal it. Finally, it is a question whether such thinking makes any sense at all, whether there is any value in sexualizing intellect in this way; so much inaccuracy and distortion are required and so little is gained by it.

Then, if it is true that modern women are too powerful, too much in public view—if equality really *has* made them domineering—their redirection toward "feminine" pursuits might *not* right the sexual and social balance. Dr. Komarovsky suggests that women might become more powerful than ever. Surely if they are so specially trained, they will want to make use of their training—and where else but in the home? Men, untrained in the "feminine" fields, lacking intuition, sympathy, the power of identification, and other "feminine" traits (knowing only business, mathematics, physics, law, technology, and abstractions), might be excluded from all family choices and decisions which do not involve logic. Dr. Komarovsky's prevision is much closer than the future. Some of the consciously "feminine" women of our own day show what the anti-feminist reality can be: they will not demand to be heard in conversations on politics, and no one can accuse them of being intellectual or of trying to compete with men. Somehow, though, the conversation is always quickly turned from politics to natural childbirth. Any man who felt uncomfortable might have difficulty

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in understanding it—that is, if he *could* feel anything or could escape from his omnipresent abstractions; annoyed, he might be told that he was envying the feminine capacity to produce life naturally. We can see that "feminine" goals serve the will just as readily as any others, but often with more hostility and less honesty.

Feminine nature may be too complicated a part of the question. There is also some irony in approaching the discussion of women's higher education from this direction; for, if feminine nature is as specific and determining as certain anti-feminists believe, then education could hardly affect it one way or the other, and there would be no point to the current criticisms.

What about the "feminine role"? Isn't *that* what women are educated for, and don't their future roles require a special education? This question is remarkably equivocal, but Dr. Komarovsky finds it a more comfortable way of dealing with the subject because the reality is not so static; roles change or conceptions of roles vary, according to culture, period, or class. Indeed, in this perspective everything is fluid; femininity becomes more a property of the role than of the person, and sexuality almost a costume put on for history's masquerades. But there is an important distinction between femininity and "the feminine role"; they are not identical nor always continuous. For this reason it is also true that changes in conceptions of roles do not account for femininity. And Dr. Komarovsky's desire to vindicate modern women in their new roles practically forces her to assert that sexual personality has only social roots—an indefensible position.

Nowadays, we often take life like a doctor's prescription, so it is not surprising to find psychology involved in this cultural quarrel, although it is a psychology very much disguised by polemical exigencies. For example, the psychological insights most often used in this discussion are those which seem to assert the immutable "naturalness" of the feminine role and character as conceived of before feminism, and the "unnaturalness," and therefore the neuroticism, of any other feminine behavior. Dr. Komarovsky fails to point out the distortions and truncations which this kind of psychologizing always involves. She notes the growth of certain political and social ideas; the development of the factory system;

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the new occupations which generate new demands on the personality; the cultural lag. Partisans of the pre-industrial feminine role seem to think that women entered the labor force out of a nasty conspiracy against the past and against Nature; Dr. Komarovsky shows how fatuous this is, and cautions us not to think the loom more "natural" than the typewriter. Her whole argument is quite reasonable, but it does not suffice as a reply to the distortions she would oppose. Even the false argument from Nature—ineluctable, determining, comprehensive—does not really need to be answered by the argument from Culture. Obviously, Nature can be expressed only through Culture; and in the entire perspective of the psychological theory usually used—psychoanalysis—civilization itself has its roots in "natural" sadism and destruction, and all the cultural traits which we embody begin in our "natural" infantile state.

Clearly, not all psychological ideas are congenial to this discussion. The first assumption of psychoanalysis—the theory of the unconscious—is consistently ignored, to the point where the arguments flounder for lack of it. We can see this consequence in the Kinsey Report, because much of its theory and method comes directly from the discovery of the unconscious, although the authors refuse to consider the idea seriously. But dreams, pre-adolescent and infantile sexual behavior, and other significant subjects of the Report would hardly have mattered to the authors had they not been (to use their word) *conditioned* by the study of unconscious processes. A similar comment can be made about Mme de Beauvoir, who provides abundant details on all the complex manifestations of women's unconscious life, but rejects the idea itself. In her perspective, whatever pertains to the unconscious is regarded rationalistically, which may be another reason why many readers found her book so outrageous. Choice she sees as always either rational or stupid; she argues that certain unconscious processes can be consciously rejected, that is, some people *choose* not to undergo them, as children! On the other hand, the theory of the unconscious, if accepted, is often used crudely; and the awareness of unconscious processes becomes tendentious, even cruel, as if the unconscious were an exclusive property of those who must be attacked. Of course, in such usage its true significance disappears. Dr. Komarovsky sees the corruption of psychoanalytic ideas and

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finds the abuse of them so pervasive in the controversy about education that she disregards the original ideas and argues against the distortions alone.

The question is important because criticisms of women's education, of feminism, and of modern women are often expressed either directly or implicitly with reference to the theory of the feminine castration complex. Modern educated women are said to envy men, wish to imitate or *be* men, in the belief that they have been poorly served by nature and society. Such sentiments are attributed literally, but are rarely identified as conscious or unconscious. The distinction is crucial; conscious sentiments produce very different effects from unconscious ones. Furthermore, to have an unconscious one does not require a Ph.D., or even a teaching certificate; one need not be educated or be a feminist at all. Or even a woman! Dr. Ernest Jones, a distinguished student of the unconscious, remarks:

> A description of the normal unconscious mind would astonish and assuredly shock its owner. It is absolutely non-moral in nature or, as judged by conscious standards, immoral. Through it course all manner of unrestrained fancies and desires, characterized by a complete disregard for the ethical and aesthetic canons of social life. A wish for death of another person, even for that of a loved relative, may arise on the slightest provocation, and the most extravagant flights of self-glorification are indulged in to the heart's content. In short, the picture may bear no resemblance to the person's conscious character.

Mother, clubwoman, bride, lawyer, grandmother, nurse, intellectual, maiden aunt, cleaning woman, tomboy, sorority sister, saleslady, princess or sweet little girl; happy or unhappy; peaceful or disturbed; a success or a failure—none of them, it seems (or their male counterparts), can escape the involvement with fantasies, dreams, repressed or sublimated wishes, and feelings unexpressed or unknown. This does not mean, as many people think, that the unconscious is more *real* than conscious life; indeed, a theory of sublimation is quite as necessary as a theory of repression. Nor is consciousness only a facade, nor distinctions between it and the unconscious unimportant. In the popular ideology of anti-feminism, however, the wife, mother, and homemaker have become too respectable to have an unconscious; only the spinster, the career woman, or the unhappy matron are so afflicted. Thus, it

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is frequently said by certain anti-feminists that the feminine castration complex will explain why a woman wants to be a lawyer instead of a mother, or a lawyer as well as a mother; but we are never told, with reference to the same theory, why a woman wants to be a mother *instead of* a lawyer, yet the castration complex may explain that too—Mme de Sévigné no less than Mme de Stäel, Andromache no less than George Sand. In fact, some psychoanalysts would find the source of *all* conscious forms of femininity in the unconscious castration complex; and motherliness itself is said to be a sublimation! Clearly, the subject is intricate and difficult; it almost invites distortion. We can see that the complex relations of psychoanalytic theories to conduct and knowledge are still far from being properly understood at the present time. And we can now understand the frequent and curious omission of the theory of the unconscious, because that theory questions the completeness of anti-feminist ideology.

If the reader thinks that education itself is practically ignored in this discussion, he is right; questions about women's capacities are academic; educated women are not demonstrably capable or incapable of any specific work or study, and even so short a period of emancipation as theirs provides little evidence that they *ought* to be social workers rather than physicists. Women's education may be *the issue* which attracts many modern sentiments about what women should do, or be, or become, but the actual methodological problems are often irrelevant to the intention of those who confront the issue. (Dr. Komarovsky's book is not brilliant sociology, but it is one of the few discussions that take the methodological questions seriously and follow out all the proposals.) Most commentaries on women's education move without so much as an example to the underlying ontological question; in fact, some of them move so quickly to their point that one is left breathless, still wondering whether philosophy *is* "feminine" or not, while the feminists are already impaled as proven arch-aggressors. The psychology of feminism is quickly elaborated with a certain curious insistence, which suggests that the relations between the sexes were quite free of hostility before the advent of this sinister and subversive ideology.

Was there so little history before feminism? Was there no neurosis, no homosexuality, no social disorder? No unhappy families,

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no men who felt powerless? The authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum* were much closer than we are to the famous medieval synthesis; they could not possibly have been protesting against our modern heresy, yet their violence resembles that of our modern anti-feminists. Indeed, the degree of affect required by the anti-feminist position makes for a curious irony; one is so often told that only the feminists have *motives*. Why should further reflection suggest that some people have always found it necessary to mock, debase, vilify, disarm, weaken and subjugate that ostensibly weaker and worthless sex?

The controversy quickly reaches its question: Who, really, is responsible?

A friend of Colette's would say of her, "*Allons, bon, voilà encore sa mère, sa chatte n'est pas loin.*" Arguments about women show the same kind of ironic inevitability, proceeding as they do from one or the other aspect of a profound truth; women are radically different from men, but their humanity is antecedent to their sex. The position taken, one can predict that not far away are certain examples, certain theories, certain facts, certain syllogisms. Differences may be arrogantly stressed, giving pain to some and comfort to others; or the community of human traits may be emphasized to the point where sexual identity disappears. From an initial emphasis, each argument can follow inexorably to its disturbing, incomplete conclusion. But should it?

Our contemporary discussions are marked by confusion and ambiguity, which have been called the signs of modern disorder; they may, instead, be signs of modern understanding. When Margaret Mead, for example, shows the values accruing to primitive societies from their demarcation of sexual roles and identities, she cannot go on to propose *the same kind* of sexual differentiation for our own society. Her argument is therefore criticized for being discontinuous, but the criticism is less useful than it appears. For, inevitable logic may diverge from inevitable experience, and discontinuities bring us closer to truth. If women's lives in our society are discontinuous, can we be surprised when arguments about them show the same pattern? It is a real question, whether the double aspect of our human situation could ever seem anything but discontinuous—and that may be not a fault but a virtue.

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HUBERT CREEKMORE

Translations from Provençal

Guillem IX, Count of Poitou (1071-1127)

COUNT WILLIAM'S ESCAPADE[1]

I'll write a poem, then sink to dreams
And dwell alone in bright sun beams.
For there are ladies with wicked schemes
    And I know who:
The ones that scorn a cavalier's
    Desire to woo.

A dame in mortal sin is seized
Who loves no loyal knight at least;
But if she loves a monk or priest,
    She's lost her mind:
By right she should be bound and to
    The fire consigned.

Far in Auvergne, past Limousin,
I went alone, disguised, and then
I found the wives of Lords Guarin
    And Bernard there;
They gave me pleasant welcome in
    St. Leonard's square.

One said in dialect to me:
"God save you now, sir pilgrim free;
You seem of quite good family
    By my own rules;
But we see going about the world
    Too many fools."

Now you must hear what I replied;
Never a word did I let slide,
And nothing at all did I confide,
    But stuff to scan:
"Babble-de-boo, babble-de-boo,
    Babble-de-ban."

1 *Vers.* "Farai un vers, pos mi sonelh . . ."

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Then said Dame Ann to Eleanor:
"We've found just whom we're looking for.
For heaven's sake, let's open our door.
He's dumb as a stone,
And through him never will our tricks
Be publicly known."

One took me under her vast attire
Into her chamber, near the fire.
She looked inviting, if you inquire,
And the blaze did grow,
And I was glad to warm myself
At the embers' glow.

For supper a capon they conveyed,
As no one else was home to aid,
Not cook nor even scullery maid,
But just we three;
And the bread was white, the wine was strong
And pepper ran free.

"Now Sister, this man is shrewd, I wage,
And leaves the talk for us to engage;
Let's bring our old red cat from her cage
Right now and try 'er;
She'll make him talk immediately
If he's a liar."

Lady Ann then fetched the thing so rash,
And it was huge, with a long mustache;
And when I saw it amidst us dash,
I feared I would
Most likely lose my courage and
My hardihood.

When we had drunk and eat our fill,
I doffed my clothes for them to thrill.
Behind they brought the cat whose skill
Was wicked and mean;
One dragged it down my ribs and thighs
And even between.

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At once by the tail with no delay
She pulled both cat and scratching away:
More than a hundred wounds that day
Did I sustain;
But still I wouldn't have spoke at all
Though I were slain.

Then Ann to Lady Eleanor said:
"He *is* mute, plain as eyes in your head;
Sister, get ready for bath and bed
And dalliance gay."
Eight days thereafter in that furnace
I had to stay.

How much I tupped them you shall hear:
A hundred eighty-eight times or near,
So that I almost stripped my gear
And broke my equipment;
I never could list the ills I got—
Too big a shipment.

I never could list the ills I got—
Too big a shipment.

Marcabrun (c. 1130-1148)

KNIGHT'S GAMBIT[2]

The other day by hedge-row seated,
A shepherdess I found secreted,
Low-born, with joy and wit as needed—
No doubt a peasant's little maid;
With cloak and coat and garments sheeted,
She sat in shift of drill, full-pleated,
And shoes and woolen hose arrayed.

I came across the plain and greeted:
"Maid," I said, "fair thing, ill-treated,
I'm sorry the cold stings unimpeded."
"My lord," thus spake the peasant maid,
"Thank God and my old nurse, well-heeded,
I'd care not if it blew and sleeted;
I'm happy, healthy and unafraid."

2 *Pastorela.* "L'autrier jost' una sebissa . . ."

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"Maiden," I said, "sweet thing, heart-rending,
I've turned off from my road for lending
You company quite comprehending;
For such a helpless peasant maid
Should not, without some nice befriending,
So many animals be tending
In such a country, without aid."

"Dear sir," she said, "birth notwithstanding,
I know both sense and folly's ending;
Your company is good, depending,
My lord," thus spake the peasant maid,
"On whether fit or unoffending;
Those who restraint keep on pretending,
Just seem to have it, to persuade."

"Maiden of such mild condition,
Your father surely was patrician
Who brought your mother such fruition,
For she was a genteel peasant maid.
Each look makes you a fairer vision,
And I'd delight in your decision
To treat me human as I've prayed."

"Sir, all my family and tradition
Belong by endless repetition
To plow and sickle as their mission,
My lord," thus spake the peasant maid;
"Raw knights who want my recognition
Should try a similar position
Six days a week and not evade."

"Maiden," I said, "you gentle fairy,
You got at birth, hereditary,
A beauty most extraordinary
Above all other peasant maids;
Your boon would be twice honorary,
If I just once hugged snugly—very!—
On top with you beneath me laid."

"My lord, you've praised me so unchary,
I'm not annoyed as customary;
You've raised my worth unnecessary,

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My lord," thus spake the peasant maid,
"So you'll get this reward to carry
On leaving: useless, fool, to tarry,
Or wait for me at noon in the glade."

"Maid, timid hearts and unrelented
Are tamed by habit, long-frequented.
At sight, I know, if you consented,
With such a pleasant peasant maid
A man could make friends well-contented
With gayest loving ever invented,
If neither one the other betrayed."

"Sir, a man with lust tormented
Swears guarantees unprecedented;
Your praise is all you have presented,
My lord," thus spake the peasant maid;
"But for an entrance fee that's stinted,
I won't trade chastity, so rented,
For the name of prostitute and jade."

"Maid, every being in creation
Must heed its nature's obligation;
For copacetic copulation
We must make ready, peasant maid,
Within the meadow's shelter-station;
For you can have no hesitation
To make this blissful escapade."

"Yes, sir; but by just allocation,
Fools seek their foolish dissipation,
The knight a knightly celebration,
And peasant seeks the peasant maid;
Where wisdom's gone or seems vexation,
A man won't keep to moderation,
So all the ancient folk have said."

"Maid, I've seen no face in the nation
More filled than yours with degradation,
Nor heart with more deception weighed."
"Sir, owls predict from observation:
Some idly gape at simulation,
Some wait the real thing, undismayed."

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The Monk of Montaudon (c. 1180-1215)

VEXATIONAL[3]

Much vexes me; you'll hear my recital?
The gabby man whose pledge is idle
and the man who's much too homicidal
annoy, and steeds that pull on bridle;
I'm vexed, God help me, and unstrung
by a youth whose shield is always slung
but never a blow against it rung;
by priest and monk with whiskers hung,
and gossips with a cutting tongue.

I find a woman most vexatious
when poor but stuck-up and ungracious;
a man with wife he loves tenacious
though she's from Toulouse and loquacious;
and I don't like the knight effete
who boasts outside his country seat,
and yet at home no charge can meet
except in bowls to grind and beat
the pepper or keep the fireplace neat.

I'm vexed as by a stinging nettle
by cowards waving flags with mettle;
by hunting hawks in sorry fettle,
by skimpy meat in a mammoth kettle;
I hate, by good St. Martin's sign,
a pint of water drowning my wine!
To meet the lame in morning-shine
annoys, and blind men I decline
because their way does not suit mine.

Long abstinence I've always hated,
and meat cooked hard, almost cremated,
a lying priest with vows violated,
an old whore who won't die, though fated;
and by St. Delmas, I despise
a vile man heaped with joy through vice;
to run when roads are caked with ice;
to flee on horseback, armed, is twice
as grim, and oaths of men at dice.

[3] *Enueg.* "Fort m'enoia, so auzes dire?"

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By eternal life, it's sorely smarting
to dine fireless with snowflakes darting,
to sleep with some old tart whose farting
brings tavern smells in her bombarding;
it's vexing and too foul a lot
to ask the drab to wash my pot;
I hate a husband rough and hot
when I've seen that cute wife he's got
and she won't offer me a jot.

By Holy God, I ever detested
a sorry fiddler in fine court nested,
a small estate with heirs infested,
fast poker by stingy bets arrested;
and by St. Martial, I hate like pain
one mantle with fur linings twain,
too many peers in one domain,
rich lords who seldom entertain,
and bows and darts on tourney-plain.

I hate, Lord help me hold my spittle,
large tables spread with cloths too little,
a scabby lackey carving victuals,
a gross hauberk of mail that's brittle;
I hate to wait outside the door
when weather's bad and showers pour;
to be with friends who wrangle and roar
is vexing, and I suffer more
to know they're wrong on every score.

I'll tell now what annoys unended:
an old slut too made-up and mended,
a poor jade feigning she's offended,
a youth admiring his legs as splendid;
by St. Abundus, I hate with gall
a soft fat dame with slot too small;
bad lords who fleece their serfs appall,
but what I hate most to befall
is, when I'm sleepy, no sleep at all.

Indeed there's more that's very paining:
to ride with no cloak when it's raining,

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to find a sow with my horse, draining
his trough of all the grain remaining;
and these I hate, and end my song:
a saddle with wobbly horn, not strong,
a buckle that has lost its prong,
and a wicked man at home day-long
who can't behave or speak but wrong.

Peire Cardenal (1225?-1272)

FABLE[4]

There was a town, I can't say which,
where such a rain fell, black as pitch,
that all the citizens who had
been touched by it when straightway mad.
All lost their minds, excepting one;
and he escaped without this done
as he was in his home, I've heard,
and fast asleep when this occurred.
When he had had his nap, he rose
and, since the rain had reached a close,
went out of doors to watch folk mix.
And all were raving lunatics:
one man was half-dressed, one quite bare,
and one spat straight up in the air;
one flung out sticks, one stones and platters,
another ripped his cloak to tatters;
one cuffed one who was walloping,
and one imagined he was king
and proudly switched his hips about;
and one leaped benches with a shout.
Another threatened, others cursed,
one swore and one laughed fit to burst,
and others talked they knew not what,
and one just like an ape would squat.
The man who had his senses still
with great astonishment did fill
to see that they had lost all wit;
he searched both high and low to hit
upon just one with sense—but vain,
for not a person there was sane.

4 *Fabla.* "Una ciutatz fo, no sai cals . . ."

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And he was much amazed at them,
but much more so were they at him,
to see him act so calm and kind;
they thought he must have lost his mind
because he did not do as they did.
Since all of them are quite persuaded
they're sane and most intelligent,
they judge him mad and violent.
One whacks his cheek, and one his neck;
a tumble he can nowise check;
one cudgels him, one jumps to scrabble;
he thinks but how to flee the rabble;
one slashes him, one tugs and mauls,
he's soundly pummelled, stands and falls.
Then stumbling in great hasty strides,
he races to his house and hides,
all muddy, beaten and half dead,
rejoicing he has saved his head.
This fable offers to your view
the world and all its people too:
this age of ours is the town,
chockful of madmen, up and down.
For the highest wisdom man can reap
is that he love God, fear and keep
his ten commandments, every one;
but now that wisdom's lost and gone;
the rain has here on earth descended:
Greed, and it has come attended
by Pride and Wickedness that sicken,
and all the people they have stricken.
So if God helps one as He will,
all others call him imbecile,
and heap upon him great abuse
for he shares not their mind or use;
God's wisdom they think foolish chatter.
But who loves God, and where, no matter,
must know they're all by madness tossed,
for God's great wisdom they have lost;
and yet they deem he's lost his mind
for leaving worldly sense behind.

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Peire Cardenal

INDICTMENT OF CLERICS[5]

Neither vulture nor the kite
Smells decayed flesh with more ease
Than the clerks and priests polite
Smell out wealthy families;
They at once hold them spellbound,
And when illness strikes that ground,
Squeeze from them such gifts undue
That the heirs can't find a sou.

Clerks and Frenchmen, parasite,
Praise these crimes, whence come their fees;
Usurers and traitors smite
All the world with this disease;
Through deceit and lies profound,
They've so dazed the earth all round
That no holy sect or crew
Knows the Scriptures through and through.

Don't you know how wealth will spite
Those who gained through villainies?
Comes a fearful thief one night,
Leaving nothing when he flees:
This is Death who casts them down
And, in yards of shrouding wound,
Sends them to that place of rue
Where their aches aren't just a few.

Man, why climb to folly's height
By transgressing strict decrees
Of your God, your Lord of Right,
Who from naught made all one sees!
He would shoot not deer but hound,[6]
Who thus fights with God thrice-crowned,
And he'll gain a guerdon too,
Such as traitor Judas knew.

[5] *Sirventes.* "Tartarassa ni voutor . . ."

[6] Literally, "The sow possesses the market," probably an old proverb; as we might say, "Cutting off your nose to spite your face."

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True God, full of grace and might,
Lord, protect us, heed my pleas!
Save the sinners from hell's blight,
From its pain and miseries;
Purge them of their sins compound
Wherein they are seized and bound,
Grant them true forgiveness who
Make confession full and true.

Peire Cardenal

POLEMIC FOR GOD[7]

A new sirventes I will now begin
Which on the Judgment Day I will recite
To him who made me by his holy might,
If he should think to charge me with a sin;
And if he'd cast me into hell's perdition,
I'll say: "Lord, pray, take no such dire position!
Since all my years on earth were harrowing,
Keep me from torments, please, and punishing."

All of his court I'll cause to marvel when
They listen to the plea that I indite;
I'll say that toward his own he sins outright
If he designs to damn them to hell's den;
For he who'd lose what might be acquisition,
By rights will lack abundance of provision;
So he should be both sweet and pardoning
And guard his dying souls and to them cling.

His door should never be denied to men,
(For this, St. Peter feels disgrace and spite,
As he's the porter), but it should invite
Each joyous soul that wants to enter in;
No court will ever crown its high ambition
With some in tearful, some in blithe condition;
And though he be a sovereign, mighty king,
Unless it opens, he'll bear challenging.

[7] *Sirventes.* "Un sirventes novel vuelh comensar . . ."

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He should disown the devils and their kin,
Then with more souls more often he'd unite;
That disinheritance would all delight;
His pardon he could write with his own pen.
He may destroy them all, with my permission,
Since we know he could shrive his own decision.
Oh fair lord God, start disinheriting
These enemies so foul and harassing.

I don't despair of you, in deep chagrin,
But rather my good hope in you keep bright
That you will help me when death holds me tight,
So you must save my soul and body then;
And I'll make you this honest proposition:
Return me to that day I first had vision
Or pardon me my sins, considering
Were I not born, I'd not have done such things.

If here I'm racked, in hell burn in addition,
By my belief, it's sinful, wrong punition;
So I reproach you for bad shepherding
Since for one good I've ills past numbering.

Saint lady Mary, I pray you and petition
That with your son you guide us in contrition,
So fathers and their children you may bring
And place them where St. John is worshipping.

Sordel (c. 1225-1270)

LAMENT[8]

I mourn for Lord Blacatz in this song's gentle beat,
With sad and grieving heart; I've reasons good and meet,
For I have lost in him a knight and friend most sweet;
All valiant virtues vanished in his winding sheet.
So hopeless is the loss, I fear no skill can treat
Or ever mend it now, unless by such a feat
As taking out his heart to make those barons eat
Who live so heartless now, then they'll have hearts complete.

First eats the heart, because his need is definite,
The Roman Emperor, if he by force and grit

8 *Planh.* "Planher vuelh en Blacatz en aquest leugier so . . ."

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Would quell the Milanese, for they've made him submit,
Despite his Germans, and usurped his perquisite.
And after him the King of France should eat of it,
Then he'll regain Castille, lost by his lack of wit;
But if his mother frets, he'll never eat a bit;
They say he won't do anything she thinks unfit.

I'd like the English King, not brave in any view,
To eat a lot of heart; then he'll be bold and true,
And seize again those lands, whence his dishonor grew,
From the King of France, who knew him languid as a ewe.
The young King of Castille should eat enough for two;
He's got two realms, and just for one his heart won't do;
But if he'll eat, in secret he will have to chew,
Because he'd get a switching if his mother knew.

I want the King of Aragon some of the same
Great heart to eat, for that will free him of the shame
He bore for Milhau and Marseilles; else his good name
He can't retrieve, whatever he may do or blame.
To serve the King of Navarre some heart is my next aim:
He's worth much more as count than king, or so they claim.
How sad that when God grants a man great power and fame
The lack of heart fells his renown and leaves him lame.

The Count of Toulouse will need to eat of lot if he
Recalls how much he had, how little's left in fee;
For if another heart his loss can't remedy,
I doubt the one inside him brings recovery.
The Count of Provence should eat, if he can now agree
A man's worth little, robbed of all his legacy;
Though he defends and holds his ground with energy,
He must eat heart to bear with his adversity.

The barons now will hate me since I've talked so free,
But tell them I hold them as slight as they hold me.

Belh Restaur, if I'm favored by you faithfully,
I'll scorn each one who thinks to scorn my company.

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KENNETH BURKE

Symbol and Association

I. Symbolism and Associationism

THOUGH there are many ways of dividing up a field, might we begin with a fairly traditional one, proposing to think of language as logical, rhetorical, poetical, and ethical? Language, in its logical dimension, ranges from factual accuracy to the most highly generalized principles of self-consistency. In its rhetorical dimension, it ranges from simple acts of persuasion to complex cultural "myths" which help identify the individual with his group and thereby promote social cooperation. In its poetical dimension, language ranges from the rudimentary self-expressive outcry to the great epics, tragedies, and the like, which are enjoyed in and for themselves, for the delight in the vigorous exercise of human utterance, undertaken for its own sake, for sheer love of the art. And in its ethical dimension, language is the portrait of a personality—for whether he wills it so or not, a man's language must somehow name his number, his role, ranging from intimate family relationships to his identity with regard to class, nation, church, avocations, and the like.

Logical, rhetorical, poetical, ethical. Probably no instance of language would fall exclusively under any single one of these heads, which are not mutually exclusive. But the four do seem to cover the ground, and are a handy empirical way of dividing up the field. They correspond to truth, expediency, beauty, and goodness (or "character").

Perhaps the closest area of overlap between my own concerns with language and the concerns of this congress[1] is where personal portraiture merges with poetical expressiveness ("free" linguistic exercising, undertaken for its own sake). For reasons that I shall try to make clear as I proceed, I take it that this area of overlap gives the two fields, methodically, a common interest in what was traditionally called the "association of ideas." And I shall consider some of the implications that seem part of this position.

[1] This essay formed the basis of a talk given at a session of the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, 1954.

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So much stress is now being laid upon *symbolism*, in both literary and psychological circles, let us begin by recalling a statement of Freud's, in his chapter on "The Dream-Work." While granting the importance of symbolism in dreams, he says:

> At the same time, I must expressly warn the investigator against overestimating the importance of symbols in the interpretation of dreams, restricting the work of dream-translation to the translation of symbols, and neglecting the technique of utilizing the associations of the dreamer.

And while granting that the two techniques can supplement each other, he admonishes:

> Practically, however, as well as theoretically, precedence is retained by the latter process [that is, the study of associations], which assigns the final significance to the utterances of the dreamer, while the symbol-translations which we undertake play an auxiliary part.

There is, then, the approach to interpretation through symbolism, and there is the approach through a brand of associationism. And might we indicate the greater importance of associations over symbols by an example of this sort? Let us suppose that a tree is interpreted as some kind of "parent symbol." Even so, when we examine any particular work or dreams in which this particular term or image occurred and recurred, we should consider the matter of the *particular contexts* surrounding it. We might ask what was mentioned *just before* the tree was mentioned. Or what was mentioned *just afterwards*. Or what elements of the various contexts might add modifications to the idea of tree, somewhat as adjectives modify a noun. All such inquiries would directly concern not symbolism, but meanings as established inductively by the collating and comparing of contexts.

II. Range of Meanings for "Symbolic"

Unfortunately, the word "symbolic" itself can be misleading. There is a sense in which *any* word is "symbolic"—as the *word* "tree" is a symbol for the *thing* tree. To speak of man as the "typically symbol-using animal" in this sense is to mean that, once man has emerged from the state of infancy, his approach to *things* is through a fog of *words* (or, if you will, he comes to see things *in the light of* words). In this sense of the word "symbol," any language (or arts such as painting, sculpture, music), could be called forms of "symbolic action."

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Freud uses the expression "symbolic action" in a much more specific sense. For instance, in Chapter IX of his *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, "symbolic action" and "symptomatic action" are convertible terms, and the "richest output" of "symptomatic actions" is said to be found among neurotics. As Freud's own studies of literary works make clear, the symbolic action of a poem is not treated as identical with symbolism in the sense of the neurotic; but apparently it does come nearer to classification under that head than under "symbolic" in the most general sense of the term.

There might be a graded series of this sort:

If one, let us say, carried out the motions necessary to attain some natural or mechanical end (as when picking up food in order to eat it, when the cells of the body really did need more nutriment), here would be a wholly "practical" act. It would be a "symbolic" act in the most general sense if one merely *talked about* food-gathering, as with these particular sentences. Then, further along, there would be the symbolic act of the poet, using words for their own sake (in such free exercising as one might expect the typically word-using animal to take delight in, as it flapped its clipped wings, in gestures vainly preparatory to a migratory flight)—nor should we be surprised if, at this stage examining contexts (or "associations"), we found that a poem about eating extended the notion far beyond the obvious meaning of the term (as Freud extended the notion of sexual libido) until it took on other aspects of appetition, and so gained poetic resonance. But, to proceed: Next there would be the symbolism of dreams and phantasies. And finally, there would be the symbolic action of the neurotic, who might even carry out some purely *practical* operation, though paradoxically his practical act (practical in the sense that it could only be done by a series of non-verbal or extra-verbal *motions*) was nonetheless motivated by strongly *symbolic* compulsions, of which the act could be seen as *symptomatic*, once you knew how to read the signs.

The series looks clear enough until we next pause to consider how few and rudimentary the practical acts of man would need to be, were it not for the elaborate network of forces and interests he has constructed with the help of his symbol-systems, both technical and moral. What of political or commercial empire-

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builders, for instance? Are not their acts at every stage defined, guided, and supported by mankind's socio-political symbolism (the intricate legal-moral-scientific lore that makes possible the complex development of invention and the almost fantastic interweavings of property, with its codes of rights and obligations)?

Do we not here get glimpses of the likelihood that man is almost fantastically symbol-ridden, even when responding to "reality" in what is considered the "normal" manner? And how might we pick our way through this jungle?

III. With Associations We Can Begin, and Begin Again

Surely, there is always the possibility of a new start, in the methodic study of "associations." Indeed, so far as the analysis of *literary* texts is concerned, we can often be stricter than is suggested by the classic expression "association of ideas." In accordance with what I would call the "principle of the concordance," we can even narrow things down to the correlating of identical *terms*: we can ask, not just what *ideas, images,* or *themes* recur in various contexts, but how some particular key *word* is found to fare, as we trace its destiny through a given work. And this inquiry would be more in accordance with the Freudian stress upon "free association" than with the stress upon "symbolism," in the Freudian use of that term (as when Freud says, for instance, that King and Queen in a dream represent the dreamer's parents, a room symbolizes a woman, a hat the male genitals, etc.). It is not within my province to dispute such interpretations even if I wanted to. I am simply recalling that Freud himself places the major emphasis upon association.

Thus, if Coleridge writes "the sunny mist, the luminous gloom of Plato," in that expression we have an explicit equating of a philosopher, or a philosophy, with two natural images. Here is a "fact" about Coleridge's terministic economy. If, then, tracking down other references in Coleridge to sunny mist, luminous gloom, and Plato, we can draw sharper lines connecting these terms (as part of a constellation, or cluster) then we are on the road to the charting of "symbolic action" in the works of Coleridge. (In "luminous gloom," for instance, I seem to detect the moon trying to break through the "sunny mist." And if the correlating of contexts proved me right, I should next watch to see

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what the term "moon" might equal, as established by the inspection of contexts in this particular idiom.[2]

Admittedly, the tracking down of terministic correlations may take us far afield. We may get lost again and again in the labyrinthine reticulations that we discover, as soon as we systematically try tracing a term through its many contexts in a given writer's work; for we soon begin to recognize other terms that tend to recur along with it, and the charting of such secondary radiations can become exasperatingly complex. But we need not ultimately fear, since as regards these procedures we can always begin anew—for the internal relations among the terms of a work are permanently there, in fixed order, an order that makes them simultaneously a physiologically growing thing and a dead body anatomized.

It is particularly engrossing to watch the key terms in a work of considerable length, such as a long novel. (Note, by the way, that the "associations" in such a work are not "free," though they were free, in the Freudian sense, at the time of the work's production, and they were likewise determined, in Freud's sense, since they strictly and necessarily represented the psychology, or personality, of the author.)

By the time one is through with such a study, one has seen how the terms for natural things, for social relations, for personal attitudes, and for the mysterious or supernatural, become vibrantly interactive. And here is the point at which observations concerning the internality of a poetic structure become observations about the mental character of the poet. In the study of "associations," psychology and literary analysis come together, without confusion.

And lest we seem to have overstressed the uniqueness of a terminology, we should note that the same method can be extended to cultural, historical trends in general. Not merely in one particular writer, for instance, but in a whole school of writers, "reason" may be equated with obedience to authority or with distrust of authority, or the relation between stability and change may be "personalized" as a distinction between "masculine" reason and "feminine" sentiment, or some such. And all such "equations" are obviously loaded with social implications, as regards attitudes and corresponding programs of action. A notable form of this sort in

[2] In my *Rhetoric of Motives*, pp. 294-298, I illustrate the principles of the method with regard to the "social ratings" of images in a novel by Henry James. Cf. also the chapter, "Freud—and the Analysis of Poetry," in my *Philosophy of Literary Form*.

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Freud, and one explicitly recognized by him, is his equating of "masculine" with "active" and of "feminine" with "passive."

IV. Possible Contrast Between Symbol and Association

But there is a next step. Freud speaks of analysis by symbolism as *assisting* analysis by free association. Yet might there be a notable respect in which the two methods are essentially at odds? Might each have implicit in it a mode of thought quite alien to the other? And if we consistently worked out the implications of each, might we arrive at two quite different, and even contrasting, views of reality?

Think, for instance, of the three terms: Father-King-God. Obviously, they can be interrelated, since each in its way represents a principle of authority. Yet there are two quite different ways of dealing with the relationship among these terms. We might class all three of them as different species of a common genus (as I did in effect when I said that each in its way represents a principle of authority, "authority" thus standing for the element they shared in common, however different might be the particular kind of authority that distinguished each). Or we might treat one of them (say, the first), as *primary*, while considering the other two as derivatives or "projections" of it.

Freud is clearly using this latter method when he says, "Even fate is, in the last resort, only a later father-projection"; or when he says: "Even in later years, if the Emperor and Empress appear in dreams, these exalted personages stand for the dreamer's father and mother" (a statement which, if interpreted strictly, would seem to indicate that one could not possibly dream about the Emperor and the Empress in their own right). And the same psychological derivation of ruler from father is followed when, in discussing Dostoevsky's relations to the Russian State, Freud reduces the tremendous reality of Tsarist power to terms of a hypothetical unconscious desire on Dostoevsky's part to have participated in the killing of his murdered father: thus, Freud says that Dostoevsky "accepted the undeserved punishment at the hands of the Little Father, the Tsar, as a substitute for the punishment he deserved for his sin against his real father. Instead of punishing himself, he got himself punished by his father's deputy" (though without this reference back to a hypothetical primary difficulty, we might see in the realities of the Tsarist State itself

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sufficient reasons for Dostoevsky to feel like making peace with it if he could).

But Freud seems to hover about the edges of the "classificatory" method when, at one point, he says that a tendency to masochism makes people over-sensitive to anyone "whom they can put among the class of fathers." And there are similar possibilities in such expressions as "the authority of the father or the parents," and "teachers, authorities, or self-chosen models and heroes venerated by society." And there are shifts between *paternal* and *parental* (without reference to the *maternal*) that seem on the edge of the classificatory method, since situations are conceivable in which the *parental* aspects of the "super-ego" might be considered as *logically* prior to the paternal, insofar as parenthood is a more general term than fatherhood.

Please do not get me wrong here. I recognize that I am not competent to discuss which of these methods is preferable, as a device for understanding the aetiology of neuroses and perversions. I want simply to make clear that there is an important distinction between the "classificatory" method (which I think fits best with a study of terministic correlations or associations in keeping with the "principle of the concordance") and the "genetic" method (which fits best with the stress upon the "symbolic," as when one term in a series is made *primary*, and its partner terms are said to be symptomatic surrogates for it).

Incidentally, we might turn here to note that this formal stress upon one term as primary (as when "father" is taken to be the psychological source of "king" and "God") is made more strikingly salient in Freud by his very effective use of such words as "primal," "archaic," "prehistoric," a style that may owe some of its derivation to the genius of that very resonant, though often somewhat ambiguously metaphysical German prefix, *ur*.

So far as the analyzing of a literary text is concerned, one might merely note (association-wise) how terms for father may happen to be surrounded by terms for king and god, how terms for king may be surrounded by terms for father and god, and how terms for god are surrounded by terms for father and king. Let us hypothetically grant Freud's hypothesis that the father is so primary, or "primal," that in contemporary relations between fathers and sons there is the "echo" of a "monstrous event," the account of which is "found in myths," and which took place at a time when

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"God the Father once walked the earth in bodily form and exercised his sovereignty as chieftain of the primal human horde until his sons united to slay him." Even granting this hypothesis, might we not at least allow the king an existence in his own right, until deposed and replaced not by a father but by a president or some kind of super-commissar, who would exist in his own right?

Empirically (since we are here concerned *only* with empirical matters) there is no evidence of the existence of any supernatural "god." This is so by the very nature of the case, since the realm of the empirical is by definition the realm of the natural, hence *not* of the supernatural. Yet in line with Platonist and Neo-Platonist dialectics, we might show how the idea of allness (which is often equated with the "divine") owes its origins not just to "fatherly" or "motherly" or "parental" forms of experience, but *fulfils the natural genius of language*, which allows for terms of ever greater and greater generalization, until we arrive at some term of terms, or title of titles, that is thought to sum up the essence of things.

Even so, we might agree that, since man the word-using animal learns his language through family living, the role of parents and of other relatives in such a mode of life may also figure. And such roles may come to seem like the very essence of the motivation, insofar as the idea of the source of allness is *personalized*. For then, unquestionably, paternal and/or parental associations will noticeably figure in any imagery that translates into terms of personality an idea so abstract as the idea of the Ultimate Ground of Everything.

V. The Personalizing of Abstractions

But perhaps now we must shuffle along one step more. See what embarrassment besets us, once we consider in purely *personal* terms the shift between a word like "father" and a word like "parent." To "personalize" the idea of "father" (and any abstract principle of "fatherhood" that may be implicit in it), a poet might rely upon some such images as we regularly associate with fathers: beard, phallus, staff, and the like. Or let him personalize the idea of "mother," and there are such standard resources to symbolize the feminine, as breasts, long hair, or designs connoting the uterine. Or the simplest differentiation may be in terms of clothing, insofar as the society has established such labels for distinguishing the sexes.

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There is no problem here, for the poet who would reduce an idea of father or mother to corresponding terms of imagery. But what of a word like "parent"? How reduce that word to its imaginal equivalent?

Such a turn to higher orders of generalization is a commonplace resource of language. And it presents no problems, if you don't ask exactly how your higher order of generalization might be translated into terms of personal imagery. But once you try to be imaginative in this sense, grave problems arise.

Would a "parent" be some such monstrosity as a hermaphroditic figure with phallus and female breasts? Or a bearded lady? Or should we follow in line with the hint that Freud implicitly gives us, when he sometimes uses references to the paternal and references to the parental as synonymous? (The corresponding picturization for this sort of ambiguity would seem to require the imagining of "parenthood" by reduction to terms of *one* parent.)

Similarly, with the idea of godhead. Leave it an abstraction (as with general terms for the source or essence of allness) and you have no problem. Reduce it to terms of father *or* mother—and though your analogy may be naïve, at least the corresponding figure would not involve a monstrosity. But, since the term for god is itself intrinsically general, what if you carried out its genius by reduction to a correspondingly *generalized* idea, not father, or mother, but *parent*? Would you not then necessarily get the kind of figure so often found in devotional verse: the male at whose generously flowing breasts the devout believer suckles?

That is, regardless of any *neurotic* motives for such imaginings, do we not here encounter a sheerly *linguistic* motive? Reduce the idea of "god" to the idea of "parenthood," then reduce the *idea* of "parenthood" to terms of *sexual imagery*, and *androgynous ambiguities* seem unescapable, unless in your imaginings you are not thorough.

The same consideration applies to other kinds of personalization, less strongly visual. "Love," for instance, is the personal equivalent of *perfect communication* (both love and perfect communication being states of communion). Hence, since the mind of the growing child is formed ideally by communion with some social matrix of ideas, if you personalize this abstract relationship, reducing it specifically to terms of physical love, do you not get "incest," the sexual union of the offspring with the parent?

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Or, let us suppose that one would reject some principle of authority. If you translate such rejection into its most thoroughly dramatic image, do you not arrive at murder, the *killing* of the authority? And would not such a kill in turn be most thoroughly imagined as a murder of the *first* and *foremost* authority that the growing child had personally experienced? Whereat, you arrive at *parricide.*

And recently we read of an Egyptian creation myth that seems to arrive, by sheerly linguistic necessities, at perverse imagery. Conceiving in sexual terms of a single original god who produced the world out of his own seed, the myth equates the creation with an all-originating act of onanism.

Similarly, in the case of Walt Whitman (whose work I happen to have been studying recently), one encounters linguistic deployments of this sort: By and large, in his *Democratic Vistas* he gives us a statement of policy, a prose exposition of his views on democracy, in terms of abstract theory. But in his *Leaves of Grass* he makes his politics personal by translating his ideas into terms of sensation, emotion, and personal actions treated lyrically.

Politically, in a typically nineteenth-century dialectic, he looks upon democracy as a principle of unity that allows maximum freedom to a vast diversity of individual interests and personalities. But when he translates this abstract design into its concrete imaginative equivalent, the principle of unity becomes a kind of all-mother from the folds of whom all mankind is unfolded and to whom all life returns at death (whereupon his "Death Carol" in "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed" becomes a cradle song). This principle of oneness, thus personalized as a universal mother, is quite analogous to the theologians' view of God as both efficient cause and final cause (man's source and destination); and another name for it in Whitman's scheme is democracy, whose freedom he celebrates as the dame of dames. But by the same token, the love of fellow-democrats for one another is also personalized, in a cult of manly attachment (or "adhesiveness") that is rife with imagery of homosexual cast.

All told, so far as the overt imagery goes, democracy is ultimately conceived in terms of kisses and hugs and doting bedfellows, with "electric" and "athletic" bodies, all united in the idea of a "magnetic" all-mother who sends them forth and confidently awaits their return (a figure or principle whose womanhood merges in-

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determinately into the ideas of sleep, death, night, the earth, the sea, and democratic love in a unified nation).

Our point is not to decide whether Whitman was or was not a practising homosexual. Our point is to show that some such structure is a "normal" resource of language, once you start, as poetry regularly and properly does, treating of abstract political, historical, cosmological relationships in terms of the personal, the intimate, the familial (with the principle of communion or "solidarity" localized in terms like "love juice," "love-buds," "limitless limpid jets of love," "life lumps," "slow rude muscle," "bosom bone," and the poet's "pent-up aching rivers"). Perhaps the psychologist must decide when a particular structure of imagery bespeaks a corresponding mode of conduct, and when it is the alternative to such conduct. The linguistic analyst of structures need go no farther than to note the terministic deployments as such, and to disclose what purely *dialectical* grounds there may be for certain kinds of "perverse" imagery, regardless of their possible further derivation from "neurotic" sources. And such inquiry centers, we would suggest, in the tracing of terministic correlations within particular complex verbal structures (a concern that I have also sloganized as the "principle of the concordance").

VI. In Sum

Where, then, are we? We have had to pick our way between a broad and a strict interpretation of the term, "symbolic," between the broad meaning (in the sense that any word for a thing is a "symbol" of the thing it stands for) and the special meaning as in psycho-analytic theory. We have tried to show why, whereas Freud advocated both analysis by free association and analysis by symbolism in the narrower sense of the term, we would consider the principle of association by far the better of the two. And sometimes it is even directly at odds with the principle of symbolism. (For instance, symbolism invites us to derive "king" and "god" from "father," whereas associationism invites us to treat all three as interrelated species of a common genus, yet with each of them existing in its own right.) And finally, we tried to show that much "symbolism" (in the narrower sense of the term) may be explainable on purely *linguistic* or *dialectical* grounds, regardless of a possible source in "neurotic" motives.

This last point brings up another possibility; namely: that the

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so-called "neurotic" motives are themselves but a special case of *linguistic* motives (somewhat, for instance, as though a poet were to try *living literally* the ambiguities that arise when he attempts to *personalize* such *abstractions* as are the common stock in trade of language).

Insofar as authority is a "parental" motive, we suggested, then the acceptance of authority (or loving communion with it) might properly be dramatized as "incest," and the rejection of authority as "parricide," if one wished to translate acceptance and rejection into their most thorough personal equivalents (as Aristotle, in Chapter XIV of his *Poetics*, notes that a tragedy is most effective "when the tragic deed is done within the family—when murder or the like is done by brother on brother, by son on father, by mother on son, or son on mother").

To speak of incest, parricide, and drama is to remind ourselves that, however different their reasons, both Freud, with his theory of psycho-analytic catharsis, and Aristotle with his theory of tragic catharsis, agreed in their high regard for Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, in honor of which Freud named his central concept, the "Oedipus Complex."

But was the Oedipus myth built solely about parricide and incest? Was there not one other notable ingredient in it? What of the fact that Oedipus was a proud man who had once saved the Theban lands and been welcomed as king for his prowess in solving the riddle of the Sphinx and thus goading that mysteriously monstrous compound of woman and lion to kill herself in chagrin?

What of the Sphinx and its riddle? And was not the kind of "Oedipus Complex" that Freud himself exemplified most clearly figured in his ambitious desire to solve the Sphinx's riddle, the riddle of human development from "four legs" in childhood, to two legs as adult, to "three legs" in old age? Childhood, we might say, is in the sign of the parents, manhood is in the sign of the stately ruler, and old age is in the sign of some theoretical principle beyond (some such "ground of all possibility" as the logic of language leads us to have words for, however vague may be the meaning suggested by those words).

Sometimes, we have said, Freud tended to overstress the purely symbolic motive here, whereby our concepts of stately authority and our ideas of some possible ultimate authority (or necessity)

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seem too simply derived from the child's "primal" experience with parental authority. And we have said that, in our view, the stress upon associations might help to get beyond this overly personal perspective on language, into a greater relative stress upon man's linguistic involvements as such (involvements natural to a creature that is typically the symbol-using or language-using animal).

Freud was concerned above all with the bepuzzlements that beset this animal, in its development from infancy (a condition somewhat analogous to the speechlessness of other animals) into the realm of verbal articulacy (and its particular kinds of symbolic manipulation). Many are the sphinxlike riddles generated by this portentous change (the change from infancy, animal speechlessness, to mature animal verbalizing). And many mysteries must be slain (or must be goaded by humble methodic pride, in pious impiousness, to slay themselves) before men can hope to cease goading one another, and being goaded by one another, to the tragically wasteful slaying of one another.

Addendum

Since I am not qualified to speak either as a professional psychologist or a professional theologian, it would be doubly irrelevant of me to import theological issues into a psychology conference. So, even at the risk of being over-obvious, perhaps I should end by re-emphasizing my point as regards the Father-King-God set. My discussion has nothing to do with the question of the existence of "God." It concerns purely the existence of "god terms." I am saying that an idea of God need not be derived from the child's relation to its father and/or mother, but is also implicit in the logic of language, which naturally makes for culmination in some word of maximum generalization that serves as over-all title of titles (and this is what we mean technically by a "god-term"). Again, from the idea of situation, or scene, we can move by sheerly linguistic routes to the idea of some ultimate unknown scene that will serve as the effective ground of all naturally experienceable scenes. Further, even so personal a theologian as St. Augustine notes that the use of "persons" with relation to the Trinity is *not* literal, but *analogical*. (Dialectically, there are ambiguities where-

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ıy the "impersonal" in the sense of the less-than-personal, as with nanimate objects, can become merged with the impersonal in he sense of the more-than-personal, as with a term for "absolute ɔersonality," or "the *principle* of personality.")

We have said that ("communication" being the most generalzed form of "love") the idea of God as "love" could be derived rom the sense of language as communication. Similarly, the idea ɔf God as "just" is in keeping with the linguistic principle of uni-ɔersalization which rounds the circle by applying to *all* persons whatever rights or obligations one might apply to *some*. The idea ɔf God as "powerful" is so obviously derivable from the experience of verbal coercive power that in Genesis we see the world being created by verbal fiat (a form of thinking that discloses the connotation of *authorship* lurking in the idea of *authority*), while in John, God is explicitly equated with the Word (whose relation to "wisdom" is obvious even in the sheer use of words to impart information). The idea of God as "good" is, from the standpoint of language, but a variant of the idea of *universal purpose* (as is made crystal clear in the opening sentence of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*: "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim"). And as for the ways in which ideas of God derive their form from a feeling for that special linguistic marvel, the negative (in expressions like "thou shalt not" and "it is not"), elsewhere we have discussed this matter at some length.[3]

All told, though Freud is unquestionably right in noting the disturbances derivable from the fact that ideas of God may be personalized after the analogy of the child's relations to its parents, there are many sheerly linguistic elements also at the root of these same ideas. And of course, there are also the analogies derived from relations to stately power, which prevails in its own right.

[3] See in general our four articles on the negative in language, in *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, Oct. and Dec., 1952, February and April, 1953, and in particular the section on "Negative Theology" in the February issue. The sheerly dialectical route to the notion of God as a term of terms is developed in "Dialectician's Hymn," reprinted in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*. For the notion of a scene-beyond-the-scene, see our chapter, "The Dialectic of Constitutions," in *A Grammar of Motives*.

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IRVING SINGER

The Language of Aesthetics

COMPARED to other fields of philosophy, aesthetics has tended to be slighted in England and the United States. In particular, the contemporary linguistic movement has devoted much attention to logic, theory of knowledge and ethics, but it has largely ignored philosophy of art. It is, therefore, portentous and a thing of note that an entire volume—*Aesthetics and Language*, edited with an introduction by William Elton (Philosophical Library)—has been given over to the agonizing linguistic reappraisal of aesthetics. The present anthology is parallel to *Logic and Language* but more specifically focussed upon a few interrelated problems.[1] As in the case of the previous collection, the present essayists bear a family resemblance to one another without actually sporting a school tie. They share a positive disdain for the high-flown methods of traditional aesthetics with its mentalism, its essentialism, its apriorism, and its liability to what Wittgenstein called "the craving for generality"; but there is no rigid or explicit program to which all the writers subscribe and there are several points of considerable importance where they diverge and even disagree.

To some readers it may appear that the pervasive opposition to traditional aesthetics is itself an a priori program evincing the craving for generality at its worst. I am not myself convinced of this, though I do think that ignorance of history occasionally blinds the analysts to the incidental merits of what they are attacking, and sometimes prevents them from realizing how others' mistakes *might* be more significant than their own barren truths. Other readers may be shocked by an apparent disingenuousness on the part of writers who seem to deny that there is, or ought to be, any such thing as "aesthetics" at the same time as they present one of their own. For example, Stuart Hampshire prefaces his remarks about the differences between ethics and art criticism by suggesting that perhaps there really isn't any "subject-matter of aesthetics."

[1] Cf. my review "The Logic of Our Language," in THE HUDSON REVIEW, Autumn 1953.

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But if this is so, the dispassionate reader may well wonder, how can Hampshire go on to tell us that a work of art is "gratuitous," that it is not "essentially the answer to a question," that it is to be attended to "for the sake of its own intrinsic qualities" etc.? For if there is no subject-matter of aesthetics, what's all this that he's talking about? One is reminded of nineteenth century thinkers such as Gautier and Nietzsche who claimed to have awakened from the dream of morality, who claimed to be immoralists and transvaluers of all values, but who turned out to be moralists and valuers in rebellion against the conventional code of their times. The communist says "there is no God and Marx is his prophet"; might not the linguistic analyst be saying "there is no philosophy and Wittgenstein is the only true expounder of it"?

The answer to this kind of question is a firm but qualified "No." Qualifications are needed because the new philosophers, and Wittgenstein himself, have certainly *sounded* as if they thought philosophy in general and aesthetics in particular would have to be eliminated by therapeutic analysis before the intellectual house could be set in order. They have certainly *talked* as if their own philosophy was a ladder that would have to be drawn up and thrown away after they had finished ascending by means of it. But this methodological approach is not, I suggest, dominant in the most recent developments of the linguistic movement. It remains as a confusing residue, but only as a residue, of an earlier and more reckless kind of positivism that is no longer characteristic of the new philosophy. To appreciate what Hampshire and the other essayists are "really" doing, we must recognize their conscious desire to write aesthetics of so radical and novel a sort that the use of the traditional term may well be misleading. Whatever their success or failure, the new analysts are trying to *solve* the traditional problems of aesthetics and not merely to *dis*solve them. The next few pages may illuminate their proposed solutions for two of the basic problems in aesthetics.

The nature of art criticism. The art critic is not just a scientist or a moralist: to this much everyone agrees. A physicist might explain to us why an oddly shaped statue continues to stand instead of falling to the ground; a statesman might warn us that a certain kind of novel increases juvenile delinquency. Interesting

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as these comments may be, we would not ordinarily say that they belong to the (aesthetic) criticism of art. The art critic is expected to clarify and evaluate works of art in a manner significantly different from either scientist or moralist. But just how do the approaches differ from one another, and how are they alike? How do the various occupations overlap, if they do overlap? Philosophers are especially interested in these questions because they lead directly into all-embracing problems about the cognitive and non-cognitive uses of language. While these issues lie beyond the scope of the present discussion, we shall find that they intrude at a number of crucial points.

In their careful and provocative analysis of this problem, the essayists try to show how the craving for generality has misled former aesthetics. The traditional philosophers conceived of the critic as a man who underwent a special kind of mysterious experience, sometimes called "aesthetic experience" and sometimes called the having of an "aesthetic emotion." Since this experience was thought to accompany the observation of any work of art, the critic was expected to detect some property or quality which must be shared by everything called "art." This led to the conclusion that critics evaluate a work on the basis of general rules or maxims without having to limit themselves to a minute examination of what the artist is doing in *this* particular painting or *this* particular sonata. In opposition to this approach W. B. Gallie says: "The job of criticism is not to show what is common to the work of art and all others—something that, if it existed at all, would be utterly trivial —but to show what is unique, and therefore, important in a given work." J. A. Passmore, Helen Knight, Margaret Macdonald, Arnold Isenberg and Stuart Hampshire carry the attack further into enemy territory. They analyze the language of criticism and evaluation in an attempt to prove that aesthetics differs from other activities by the very absence of general criteria which would enable a critic to base his judgments on a law or principle that transcends the particular work at hand.

The most conservative of the analysts is Passmore. While he insists that goodness in literature involves something entirely different from what it does in painting or music, Passmore thinks that works within a single art might be subject to the same criteria. There is no point in trying to find criteria for goodness in art as

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a whole, he says, but there may be a kind of "well-doing" peculiar to each of the different arts. Mrs. Knight is a little more extreme. Suggesting that the meaning of "good" is always determined by criteria, she holds that the criteria for the goodness of particular works of art may always be different. As a result, there cannot be a single kind of "well-doing" peculiar to any one art. What she means by "criteria" is illustrated by examples from the criticism of tennis. The meaning of "he's a good player" is determined by the criteria that the critic uses to justify his claim. The critic might say that the player is good because his aim is accurate, or because he has a smashing service, or because he is able to win. On different occasions we judge by different criteria, but the meaning of any one evaluation is a function of the criteria involved. Thus, it makes sense to say that Cézanne's "Green Jar" is good only if one is prepared to point out the "criterion-characters" of the work: "That apple is placed so that it exactly balances the main mass on the right; the lines of tablecloth, knife, and shadows repeat each other; the diagonal of the knife counteracts the diagonals of the shadows." The "Green Jar" is good because it fulfills the criteria of balance, repetition, and counteraction. Other paintings may be good for other reasons: because they convey solidity or plastic form, or combine geometric structure with variety, and so on.

Mrs. Knight's essay succeeds as an account of how reasons are given to substantiate a value judgment; and her emphasis upon the diversity of reasons given on different occasions is, I think, entirely beneficial. At the same time, I am afraid that her analysis may be self-defeating. She explains the nature of evaluation by referring to criteria which are used to justify a critical claim; but she does not tell us how to discover which are the *relevant* and *reliable* criteria. In the use of evaluative language there is more than just the giving of reasons: there is also an implicit claim that these are *good* reasons, that the criterion-characters being cited are the ones which really do determine the merit of the work in question. If two men disagreed about the value of the "Green Jar," we would not only demand their respective reasons but also their grounds for thinking that these reasons are specifically relevant to the goodness of Cézanne's painting. If the negative judgment were based on the claim that household articles are not suitable for artistic representation, we would probably dismiss the evalua-

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tion without further ado. Though a criterion-character had been cited, it was not one that we ordinarily consider relevant.

Mrs. Knight sees the difficulty and tries to overcome it. She suggests that all disputes based on conflicting criteria of goodness are merely verbal: since the criteria are different, the meaning of "good" must be different. But surely this is not right. It ignores the fact that an evaluation makes a claim to authority and objectivity. When people disagree about works of art, they do not generally re-define "good" in accordance with one set of criteria rather than another. Instead, they claim that their criteria really are the appropriate ones for determining goodness. If a man disapproved of the "Green Jar" merely because it pictured household items, we would not say that he was using "good" to mean something different from what we mean, but rather that he had no *right* to deny the goodness of this painting. We would say that his reason was not an acceptable reason: we would not deny that "good" meant the same for him as for us. Mrs. Knight recognizes this when she asks herself: "What is the guarantee of a criterion? What determines the truth of 'so-and-so is a criterion for goodness in pictures'?" She answers that criteria are fixed on the basis of individual preferences, and she implies that there is some relation between an art critic's preferences and criteria that are especially reliable. Just what this relation is she does not say.

Miss Macdonald criticizes Mrs. Knight in an attempt to move still further away from any concession to generality in art. Miss Macdonald complains that Mrs. Knight still allows the possibility that two works might have criterion-characters in common, thus overlooking the uniqueness of each production. She also reminds us that we cannot neatly fillet out a set of criterion-characters: Mrs. Knight's account "seems to assume that a work of art is an object rather like a cake, whose meritorious features may be picked out, like plums, and exhibited." This way of looking at art criticism Miss Macdonald traces to the lingering influence of scientific models. Science is based on observations that are not affected by the idiosyncrasies of time and space, but critical evaluation depends on interpretations which vary from observer to observer; scientific conclusions are influenced by the discovery of new facts whereas aesthetic evaluation is independent of any change in evidence; scientific statements can be true or false, but statements in

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art criticism are neither one nor the other and can only be accepted or rejected. Miss Macdonald suggests that the art critic resembles the actor or lawyer more than the scientist or logician. Far from using methods of induction or deduction, the critic acts like the counsel who "creates" his client's case out of the rudimentary facts presented to him. Unlike the counsel, however, the critic also judges the case. There are no laws or principles by reference to which the critic can justify his evaluation: "To affirm a work of art is good or bad is to commend or condemn; but not describe. To justify such a verdict is not to give general criteria as 'reasons' but to 'convey' the work as a pianist might 'show' the value of a sonata by playing it."

Isenberg and Hampshire carry Miss Macdonald's argument a step further. They emphasize the differences between art criticism and ethical criticism. Isenberg denies that aesthetic evaluations can be justified in any way comparable to the justification of ethical evaluations. In an ethical dispute a person might support his judgment by referring to some empirical state of affairs: for instance, to show that a certain piece of legislation is ethically bad he might point out the likelihood of its leading to widespread suffering. A consideration of this sort would give us some reason for making an ethical judgment. According to Isenberg, there are no such reasons to be offered in aesthetics. When a critic says "this painting is good" and then points out the matching of colors and the balance of the masses, he does not mean to justify his evaluation by citing some principle in accordance with which all paintings with matching colors and balanced masses would be good. Since they realize that an individual quality can be good or bad depending on the context in which it occurs, art critics do not try to support their judgments by criterion-characters of any sort. Instead, they direct our attention to some quality in its context within a particular work and hope that the force of contagion will move us to respond as they do. Isenberg believes that we confuse aesthetics with science or ethics if we expect to find a general norm or principle in terms of which one could give reasons for a critical judgment: "in the present stone age of aesthetic inquiry, we have not even the vaguest idea of the form that a 'law of art appreciation' would take." In a like manner, Hampshire claims that anyone who expects to find principles of criticism at all parallel to prin-

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ciples of conduct is deluded by a false analogy between ethic and aesthetics. In ethics there are definite rules to guide conduc whereas in aesthetics there is nothing of the sort. The moralis can tell someone what he should have done in a moment of prac tical decision; but since a work of art is a "free creation," the critic cannot tell the artist what he should have created. Unlike the moralist, the art critic is concerned with particular qualities of particular works rather than a general formula or recipe.

The advantages of this approach are patent. It directly opposes the Procrustean attitude in philosophy and criticism; it deflates misleading abstrusities about Art with a tremendously capital A; it refuses to reduce away the differences between aesthetics and science or ethics. And yet, one cannot help feeling that the new linguistic philosophers often reduce away real and important *similarities* between these different fields. Having staunchly throttled the craving for generality, they seem to have succumbed to what might be called "the craving for uniqueness." Critics help us most when they prepare us for the intelligent enjoyment of particular works of art; but no work of art occurs in isolation. To a large extent, our appreciation of a single work is a function of our acquaintance with works of a similar nature. Once we see how Shakespeare is able to develop character through action, we are not likely to be satisfied with the efforts of a lesser playwright. Similarly, there is no one quality which all things called "art" have in common, and yet we can specify the *kinds* of enjoyment which an object must provide if it is to enter into our experience as a work of art. I will not undertake this analysis here except to remark that we would probably deny that something is a work of art (rather than a mere instrumentality or an exercise or an irritant) if it did not give anyone sensuous delight, emotional excitement, and intellectual satisfaction of some sort. If we wish, we might say that the capacity to provide such enjoyment is a "property" of all works of art. We must not confuse this so-called property with a peculiar quality or queer, indefinable "essence"; but as long as we avoid such confusion I fail to see the danger in giving rein to a legitimate taste for generality as well as a legitimate taste for uniqueness. We may then go on to see how aesthetics resembles science and ethics as well as differing from them.

For one thing, there is every reason to believe that art criticism

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mploys methods akin to scientific induction and that its evaluations can be true or false. Miss Macdonald would have us conceive of the critic as a lawyer creating his client's case. I think I see the aptness of her analogy. Indeed, she could well have made it more extreme. The critic often resembles a dancer who knows how to lead and how to follow, or a sparring partner who knows how to trade blows with the champion. Still, our awareness of these non-cognitive functions should not prevent us from seeing that even the evaluative statements of art criticism may be true or false. I would have no hesitation in saying that the following statement is false: "Beethoven's Battle Symphony is the best piece of music ever written." Miss Macdonald insists that such statements are acts of decision which can only be accepted or rejected without any question of truth-value. Actually, however, we would substantiate our claim that the statement is false by citing the experience of everyone who knows anything about music. In more difficult cases, we would justify our counter-evaluation by referring to an indefinite body of qualified critics; and to this extent, at least, aesthetics employs a kind of induction similar to the methods of both science and ethics.

Aesthetic induction, like scientific and ethical induction, is based on the reports of competent observers suitably equipped and properly disposed. If there were a dispute about the color of a shirt, we could resolve it by taking the shirt into a laboratory to be tested by persons who are qualified in such matters. Similarly, we could substantiate an ethical judgment by showing that all or most reasonable men who are qualified to settle moral disputes would tend to agree. Their agreement might not give us any basis for *deducing* our ethical conclusions, but at least it would count as a supporting reason. In denying that there is any such reason to be given for aesthetic judgments, the essayists ignore the reference to a competent judge implicit in most, if not all, evaluations of art. Mrs. Knight failed to give us any basis for choosing among criteria; her critics err in denying that there are any reasons to be given. I should like to suggest that we normally justify aesthetic evaluations by citing criterion-characters which would please authoritative critics. Just how to define these critics is a matter of some difficulty, but ordinary aesthetic evaluation cannot be understood without them. One substantiates the claim that a work of art is

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good by specifying how it would enter into the relevant experienc of trained and discriminating observers who are fully prepared t enjoy the work without bias or undue predilection. On no othe basis could we explain our refusal to credit the aesthetic judgmen of the man whose political views dispose him against the merits o a novel, or of the ignoramus who boasts that he doesn't knov anything about painting but he knows what he likes.

If this much is accepted, it becomes more likely that we car find critical norms or laws of appreciation that underlie a great deal of ordinary art criticism. These laws are not always made explicit, just as the law of gravity or the rule about promise-breaking are not, but they function in critical practice roughly in the same way that the other principles function in scientific and ethical practice. Would we not say that there is at least a prima facie good reason for condemning works of art which violate the following principles (all of them referring to the experience of a competent judge): the poet's language must not be so esoteric as to prevent fairly immediate comprehension, the novelist's message must not be introduced as a bit of propaganda isolated from the theme or context of his work, the musician's contrasts in pitch, rhythm, or loudness must not be so great as to unnerve the listener or shatter his eardrums, the painter's colors must not be of a flat and dense darkness that precludes all sharp high-lights, the playwright's action must not involve mayhem, rape, or self-mutilation so realistically portrayed as to disgust the spectator. In addition to these specialized rules, one might mention general ones such as those that advise the artist to keep the audience in suspense, to develop a particular problem or issue and not to leave a great many unresolved questions, to unite the different parts of the work by a definite and discernible theme, to use images and examples instead of mere abstractions. All of these rules are flexible and no one would wish to deny that great works of art can violate one or another of them. But the same holds for the principles of science and ethics. The law of gravity is always subject to modification on the basis of future experience; and one is always free to decide whether the rule about promise-breaking *ought* to be applied in a particular case.

Having said all this, however, we may yet sympathize with the major emphasis of the new philosophers. Traditional aesthetics

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often tried to govern the creation and criticism of art by means of a rigid, detailed code of standards. One school after another laid down rules which required specific techniques, subject-matters, styles, and even the expression of political and philosophical preferences. As a result, art flourished in only the prescribed manner and later artists and critics felt the necessity to rebel. In doing so, they usually imposed a strict code of their own. The writers I have been examining decry all such codes, and I am entirely in agreement with their liberal attitude. Unlike them, however, I hasten to admit that this liberalism involves an attempt to *reform* aesthetics and not merely an analysis of its ordinary use of language.

The nature of the work of art. In ordinary language we have two different ways of talking about paintings, statues, poems, and musical compositions: sometimes we treat them as "physical objects"; sometimes as "works of art." Perhaps I should speak of physical "entities," since poems and pieces of music are configurations of marks on a page and patterns of sounds in the air rather than "objects"; but let's not boggle at the word. Also, let us ignore the interesting fact that poems and musical works are not entities of the same sort as paintings and statues (a poem or a piece of music can occur in different places at the same time whereas a painting or a statue cannot). For present purposes, let us merely consider the differences between calling something a physical object and calling it a work of art. As a physical object, the Monet hanging on a wall is just a piece of canvas covered with pigments and framed in wood—it could be crated, or weighed, or committed to the flames. To say this much, however, is not yet to say what it is about the Monet that enables us to call it a work of art. Without being guilty of absurdity or bad logical taste, one could not speak of the Monet as a work of art in exactly the same terms used to describe it as a physical object. The work of art is not on the canvas in the same sense in which the pigments are on the canvas. So too an author's message is not on the printed page in the same sense in which the words are. A distinction of this general sort structures the deflationary wit of a Hamlet who claims to be reading "words, words, words." What then is a work of art, and how are statements about it related to statements about physical objects?

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W. B. Gallie, Margaret Macdonald, Beryl Lake, and Paul Zi work at the problem. Gallie examines the position of Idealis philosophers, such as Coleridge, Croce, and Collingwood, wh maintain that the work of art (or as they would say, "the essenc of art") is something in the experience of the artist or spectato and therefore cannot be defined in terms of the physical object On this view "the true work of art is the internal picture," fron which it follows that works of art exist only in the minds of thos who create or enjoy them. Gallie criticizes the Idealist position b distinguishing between the value of a work of art and the work o art itself. He is willing to admit that the value of a work of art belongs solely to the experience of the artist or spectator, but he denies that the work of art itself does. He insists that since the physical object contributes to our enjoyment, in the way that sounds produced by a piano might, the physical object is obviously relevant to the existence of the work of art.

As it stands, Gallie's criticism does not seem cogent. He admits too much when he says that the value of the work of art, if not the work of art itself, belongs to the experience of one who creates or enjoys it. The value of the Monet I look at or the Shakespeare I read or the Bach I listen to does not belong to *me*, and neither does it belong to the individuals who created the works of art in question. On the contrary, it belongs to the works of art themselves. The works of art could not have any value, positive or negative, unless there were someone to enjoy them; for their value is their potentiality to be enjoyed in a certain way. But this does not *locate* the value in the experience of one who does the enjoying. Furthermore, Gallie seems to miss the point of the Idealist argument. The philosophers he refers to were perfectly well aware that the physical object, the "material embodiment" of a work of art, contributes to our enjoyment and thereby contributes to the existence of the work of art. What they wanted to affirm was that all such contribution is inessential, that it does not define the nature of the work of art, that in principle if not in practice it can always be dispensed with. The physical object thus becomes an accidental middle-man, mediating between the independent, private experience of the artist (his "inspiration") and the independent, private experience of the spectator (his "intuition" of the artist's inspiration). In order to criticize this kind of theory

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one need not deny the distinction between work of art and physical object, for that distinction is innocent enough; instead, one has to show that it does not make sense to speak of the experience of a work of art such as a painting or a poem except in terms of our experience of some physical object. One has to show that the contribution of the material embodiment is essential both in principle and in practice. One way of showing this would indicate that as our experience detaches itself from the physical object, it approximates revery or day-dream. And while a revery or day-dream may itself be valuable, it is different from the experience of a painting or poem. Finally, we could undermine the Idealist argument by proving that it is impossible for a determinate experience to be private either in principle or in practice. A large segment of the philosophy of both Dewey and Wittgenstein (in the *Investigations*) is devoted to just this kind of proof.

Miss Macdonald puts the matter better than Gallie when she says that the Idealist position treats the physical object as "a mere vehicle, a stimulus to the reproduction of the 'real' work in an observer's mind." She points out that Sartre commits himself to a similar theory when he says that the work of art is "something unreal" and to be contrasted with the "material analogue" that the artist constructs. To both Sartre and the Idealists she rightly complains that just because the work of art is not the same as a mere physical object, it does not follow that the work of art is a mental state or a queer entity such as the word "unreal" would seem to suggest. Implying that "work of art" is one of those substantival phrases that are not about objects at all, Miss Macdonald concludes that there simply is no point in trying to discover what kind of object the work of art is. She ends with the comfortable assurance that "aesthetic, like all other philosophical problems, are those of how words are used rather than of what kinds of object exist."

It is unfortunate that Miss Macdonald drops the analysis at this point, for her conclusion raises as many doubts as it puts to rest. Miss Macdonald wishes to remind us that we cannot describe something as a work of art in *exactly* the same way that we describe things as physical objects or mental states. With this I would entirely agree. Imagine asking someone to describe a painting of his acquaintance, and imagine that all his responses were of the

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following two kinds: "the canvas measures 5 x 4," "there is a wooden frame," "the whole thing weighs 85 pounds," etc.; or else "it makes me feel warm all over, like swallowing a bowl of soup," "when I look at it, I see a blinding flash," etc. Of such a man we might say that he knows how to talk about physical objects and mental states but not about works of art as such; for some reason he has not learned this use of language. But unless I am mistaken, Miss Macdonald wishes to say something more than this. In suggesting that a work of art is not an object of any sort and that problems of aesthetics are entirely linguistic, she seems to be denying that we refer to *any* empirical state of affairs when we talk about works of art. This, however, is as far from the truth as anything that Sartre or the Idealists said. A work of art is not a mental state and describing something as a work of art is different from describing it as a physical object; but from this it does not follow that statements about works of art are non-empirical. Has Miss Macdonald forgotten that there are processes and relations in the world? If you asked me how to bake a cake or what it is for someone to be an uncle, I would not refer you to a mere physical object or a mental state or a queer entity, and yet I would talk about an empirical state of affairs. The process of baking a cake: first you sift the flour and then you add milk, and then, and then. . . . The avuncular relation: if a person's father has a brother. . . . Now I would like to suggest that when we talk about works of art, we use the language of process and relation and that this language has empirical reference just like the language we use to describe things as physical objects.

Before considering which processes and relations are relevant to a work of art, let us examine two further essays. Miss Lake tries to show that the aesthetic theories of Croce and Clive Bell are "irrefutable" inasmuch as they are based on definitions which preclude the possibility of their being discredited by unfavorable evidence. Croce says that "the real work of art is an imaginative, or spiritual, or mental, not a physical thing . . . an occasion of intuitive knowledge"; Bell says that "the essential quality in a work of art . . . is significant form." Miss Lake argues that these "aesthetic statements" cannot be empirical since neither Croce nor Bell would admit that any possible state of affairs could falsify them. Their assertions are true by definition, just like "bachelors are unmarried males." At the same time, aesthetic statements

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differ from the definition of "bachelor" insofar as they are conscious and calculated deviations from ordinary usage. Confronted with the ordinary use of terms like "work of art," Croce and Bell would each claim that his own definition was preferable. Consequently, a dispute between them or between any other aestheticians would be entirely different from a dispute about a matter of fact: e.g. whether more people went to plays in England than in France. For in this case, there would be no question of alternative definitions and we could easily settle the issue by gathering evidence. Miss Lake concludes that aesthetic theories "originally arise from a desire to emphasize one fact about aesthetic objects and experience to the firm exclusion of the rest"; therefore, it is proper to sympathize with them or react against them but not to ask whether they are true or false.

Miss Lake's position is, I think, infected with the same virus as Miss Macdonald's. Aesthetic theories are significantly different from theories about the number of people who go to plays in England and France. This much is agreed; but it does not follow that aesthetic theories are inevitably non-empirical. If no possible state of affairs were allowed to test the generalizations of Croce and Bell, we certainly would have to take their statements as definitions of a sort. But it is not at all clear that their aesthetic statements *are* used in this way; sometimes they seem to be a priori, at other times not. And even if Croce and Bell treated their key statements as non-empirical, they might still claim to be explicating ordinary usage and not deviating from it. This kind of consideration is extremely important since it is precisely at this point that aesthetic theories differ from theories about English and French playgoers. Ordinary statements about theatre audiences are obviously empirical because no one is in doubt about the use of terms like "plays," "England," "France," etc. In the case of an aesthetic theory, however, we can never be sure: we have no guarantee that the aesthetician is employing words like "art" or "work of art" in their ordinary usage, and even in ordinary usage the texture of aesthetic terms is open to far-reaching ambiguity and vagueness. As a result, aesthetic disputes are *liable* to end up in verbal issues more quickly than disputes about the number of playgoers; but to say this is not to say that any aesthetic theories are inherently irrefutable.

How then would we refute Croce or Bell? There are at least

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four methods that we could employ. First, we might take them to be making empirical statements about works of art (as that term is ordinarily used) and then show that there is little or no evidence to support their generalizations. Miss Lake disposes with criticism of this sort because she thinks the evidence is never conclusive: "we can point to facts that seem to falsify it as well as to facts that tend to confirm it." Actually, however, she hardly provides a single bit of evidence in favor of either Croce or Bell. Second, we might take them to be explicating ordinary usage by presenting a non-empirical statement which illustrates the use in question. "Bachelors are unmarried males" is a good example of an a priori statement that might be worth making if someone did not know how the word "bachelor" was ordinarily used. To criticize an aesthetician here we would have to show that he has not analyzed ordinary language correctly. Third, we might take them to be extending ordinary usage for the sake of solving relevant problems. This is what scientists and technicians often do. If the extension is too extreme or if one cannot justify it in terms of utility, the procedure is highly suspect. Miss Lake claims that Croce and Bell are distorting the ordinary use of terms like "work of art"; if she could show that such distortions are of no avail philosophically, I should think we would say that she had refuted their "irrefutable" aesthetic theories. Fourth, whether we take the aesthetician to be explicating an ordinary use or introducing a new one, we might reject his definition on the grounds that it employs dubious or incomprehensible language. This complaint would be especially telling against Croce and Bell. They define the work of art as an occasion of "intuitive knowledge" in the one case, and as "significant form" in the other. But they do not sufficiently clarify their use of these strange terms, and it is a hardy philosopher who would venture to say what in the world they are talking about.

Since all of these methods give us *good reasons* for accepting or rejecting aesthetic theories, I cannot see why Miss Lake wishes to accord them nothing but unadorned sympathy or bare hostility. And, in any event, there seems to be little reason for thinking that *all* aesthetic theories are based on distortions of ordinary language. Miss Lake sometimes sounds as if her analysis applied only to Croce and Bell, and sometimes as if it covered all of aesthetics. But if she meant the latter, I wonder how she would characterize her

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own remarks. After all, she must have some theory about works of art if she is going to assert that Croce and Bell "emphasize one fact about aesthetic objects and experience to the firm exclusion of the rest." Is her theory based on a priori statements of the sort she assigns to Croce and Bell?

In turning to Ziff's essay, we come to the most extensive treatment of our problem in the collection. Ziff examines Samuel Alexander's attempt to define the work of art in terms of what he called "the artistic illusion": in the work of art the representation of a girl running looks to us as if the girl were really in motion, whereas in the physical object there is only a stationary canvas and obviously nothing in motion. And in general, the artistic illusion would cause us to take the painted figures as objects in a three-dimensional world instead of lines and colors on a two-dimensional canvas. In attacking this position, Ziff suggests that when we speak of the painted girl as being in motion, we are not ordinarily deceived about the matter. Consequently, there is no *illusion*, artistic or otherwise, in our experience of the work of art. Similarly, he denies that there is any "illusory or imaginary object" to be contrasted with the physical painting. He argues that we can either say that the girl is in motion or that the girl is not in motion, and that we ordinarily distinguish between these descriptions in such a way as to rule out the possibility of their contradicting one another. There are two different kinds of descriptions, he says, and not two different kinds of objects. "There aren't two things being referred to when we say, in the carpenter's shop, 'The painting is flat,' and when we say, in the gallery, 'The painting has great depth.' There is just one, and it is the painting."

As a criticism of Sartre and the Idealists, Ziff's argument would be strong and appropriate. For they do talk as if the work of art were something separate from the physical object, as if it were a wholly different kind of object. But Alexander is quite a different cup of tea. I fully sympathize with Ziff's desire to get rid of confusing terms like "artistic illusion," but I fear that in the attempt he may have done Alexander an injustice. Ziff gives us *no* reason to believe that Alexander considered the experience of the work of art to be illusory in the sense of being deceptive. Indeed, it is clear from the context that Alexander did not think that the artistic illusion was an illusion of the sort that a thirsting man might have when he sees water in the desert. He specifically says

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that "the artistic illusion is unlike ordinary perceptual illusion," and he elsewhere insists that it is not erroneous or hallucinatory. Alexander was apparently using the term "artistic illusion" as a metaphorical means of suggesting that the observer who perceived nothing but the physical characteristics of a painting (pigments devoid of motion) would not be treating it as a work of art. In order to see the painting as a work of art, and not merely as a physical object, you must undergo quasi-illusions like seeing the girl run. I think this is what Alexander means when he says that "the illusion is of the essence of the work of art"; and, so far at least, he would not be subscribing to the view that the work of art is a different kind of entity from the physical object.

Still, even if Alexander could defend himself against Ziff's criticism, his position is fallible on other grounds. For if the so-called illusion is of the essence, Alexander would have to deny that an observer was treating the painting as a work of art whenever he saw it without being carried away by the representation: in our example, whenever he perceived stationary girls instead of running ones. But this appears arbitrary; it seems to limit the work of art to special realistic effects. Stylized representation, as in Egyptian or Byzantine paintings, is designed to forestall the kind of experience Alexander has in mind, and surely no one would want to say that we cannot treat these paintings as works of art. Even in the case of realistic or naturalistic painting, the "illusory" effect of seeing girls run will alternate with the realization that, in another sense, the girls are stationary figures that merely *represent* people in motion. When we look at a Cézanne still life, first we see it as a flat canvas, a two-dimensional design that represents objects in space; then we see it as something that has a spatial depth of its own; later our experience varies. The work of art must not be defined in terms of any particular effect, though it may be true that *some* works of art cannot be fully appreciated unless we undergo quasi-illusions of a certain sort.

Let us return now to processes and relations. On the one hand, we cannot describe a painting, statue, poem, or musical composition as a work of art if we take it as nothing more than a physical object; on the other hand, the work of art is not a different kind of object. We call the painting a physical object when we think of it as pigments on a canvas; we call it a work of art when we think of how the pigments would participate in someone's aesthetic

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experience: that is, how the physical object would enter into a relevant process and relation. Belonging to a process, the work of art is defined in terms of human activities such as looking at lines and colors, seeing how they balance and interact with one another, perceiving what the figures symbolize or represent, and so on. Belonging to a relation, it is defined in terms of an observer who knows how to look at paintings (not necessarily an authoritative critic). In relation to the scales that weigh it or the carpenter that measures it, the painting is just a physical object; it is a work of art only in its capacity to enter into the experience of someone who undergoes it for the sake of its own enjoyable qualities and symbolic value. And finally, though we cannot say that this experience is illusory, neither can we rule out the possibility of its sometimes providing something like an illusion.

There are two important essays which I cannot discuss here, but which are worth recommending. In "The Expression Theory of Art," O. K. Bouwsma analyzes the use of sentences like "the music is sad"; and in "Feelings" Gilbert Ryle examines the various senses in which we could be said to "feel" something. Ryle's essay is clearly the best in the collection; one only wishes that it had more to do with aesthetics. Starting with seven different uses of "feel," Ryle avoids both the craving for generality and the craving for uniqueness. He draws a superb family portrait or group biography in which each use stands alone at the same time as it is related to the other uses in interesting and significant ways. In suggesting that not all of the essayists attain this kind of balance, I have no desire to minimize their actual contribution. I consider it a grave misfortune that linguistic analysis has become an intellectual dueling-issue and that professional philosophers feel the necessity of choosing up sides for or against it. Perhaps the revolutionary character of the new movement makes conflict inevitable. But even so, total and unremitting warfare is harmful here as elsewhere. English analysis, as represented by these essays, is neither cake nor stone. One may sometimes yearn for the underground truffles of French thought or even the intravenous feeding of scientific American philosophy, but no really hungry man would refuse the mutton stew of present-day English analysis.

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JOHN HOLLOWAY

The Life and Adventures of Heroic Mr. Clubman

This tale's in all the books. But not this way.
You know the crafty artist can do better
Than Nature: he selects the things to say:
He keeps the spirit and—adjusts the letter.
Yet think of this: he may be *your* debtor
With the tale of little Mr. Clubman; who
Must be the poet, of course. But may be you.

Mr. Clubman didn't have any Club,
Being just a straightforward fellow three times wed.
His recreation was the local pub
No doubt . . . and, well, he wasn't strong in the head;
Though physically, could have truckled up Procrustes' bed.
Which means he was very much the ordinary man.
The average; and the mean too; and the median.

He had, they do say, a club for weapon; yet
One must remember how a legend grows
Smooth as a plant. It was a cigarette
Perhaps: like those with which men strike a pose,
Nonchalant but kind, in photographs. Who knows,
It may have been something quite . . . Herculean:
And perhaps it was nothing but a simple pen.

Little Mr. Clubman wasn't very tall,
Yet he was quite a dab hand at a kill.
But his methods, they were strictly empirical:
He'd a good education and lots of technical skill.
If you heave at the point of balance, why, it will
Topple a monster over like a pound of butter:
Oh, Mr. Clubman would roll anything into the gutter.

In fact, there's a lot to say about his toppling
Tricks: which he did a variety of different ways.
But in a case like this, one mustn't spring
All round at random. Of course, Horace says

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You ought to start right off *in medias res,*
But I mean to go through Clubman's heroic deeds
As orderly as a little string of beads.

First—somehow, yes, one might expect it—he
Had a father who wasn't married to his mother,
But came disguised when father was on the spree.
His name? One name's as good as any other,
Chance; Fate; the *Zeitgeist*; Bad (Good) Luck; Big Brother—
He laid down the wine: Clubman curled
Up in his cellar and waited for the world.

World's an acquisitive society
For which no waiter has to wait too long:
At the appointed time he struggled free,
And in that vinous cellar had waxed strong,
And subject fit for this heroic song,
And hero fit to show a comic trend;
And comic fit to meet a tragic end.

Yet, about his beginning, there had been
Some trouble: for the Other Woman was
Spouse of the Zeitgeist and eternal Queen
Of Heaven. She wronged him at his birth, because
She jockeyed him out of his rightful heritage.
For him, from the start, the game was catch-as-catch-can.
He was the average, and the mean too, and the median.

So he was born: and had to pass his time
(Spending or wasting) in the packed station
Waiting-room, on the blank no-service line:
A place of drudgery, recreation,
Even a rough kind of education:
The grand club-handed hero of the earth
(With a faded birthright, and a shady birth).

His formal education sought to train
Mens sana in . . . you know the concept. And
The pedant has, you know, a first-class brain
Usually, though deteriorating: and
Perverted blindly to a trivial end.
(Yet who shall see what ends are trivial,
Or legislate about such things at all?)

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At all events, he had pedants enough,
Of the intellectual and the physical kind,
To teach him music, wrestling—all such stuff
As trims the body or fines down the mind.
But not one of them taught him to unwind
The labyrinth of anxiety at his centre
That fretted him on into every fresh adventure.

For one must remember, the profound inner source
Of his stern resolve, *θυμός*, heroism,
Was not just his 'heroic mould'—of course
Not. Nor self-aggrandizement. Nor exhibitionism.
Heroics were a deep symptom of mental schism,
A kind of genuine madness that could knock him flat,
Or shake him the way a big dog shakes a little cat.

What drove him on, to be the terror
Of the world's monsters, being no plain, no crude
Courage, but sad desire to atone for error
And worse than error: slaughtering his whole brood
In the aberration of one crazy mood
Maybe. So it often is: the strong are strong
In the now righteous consciousness of their own old wrong.

Primitive monsters were all fierce and cruel:
Today these turn up only in burlesque.
The modern kind lurk in a works or school,
Or startle a business magnate at his desk,
Yet have the ancient features: picturesque,
Beautiful—and about as dangerous
As a nine-headed hydra to a mouse.

Indeed, the many-headed hydra's fit
To stand for all that Clubman strove to kill.
(Pity historians never thought of it!)
What does us a deep good, must also, ill.
Nature was always complex, always will
Be complex, monsters range with natural fauna.
But Clubman knew no zoology; and he fought his hydra.

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Well, in his life were many such deeds (few words).
And his fame grew, as if he had done battle
With a fierce lion, say. Or brazen birds
That panicked only at a golden rattle.
Killed wild man-eating horses. Captured cattle
Guarded by giants, watch-dogs. As if he
Killed a poor bull, that lost its wits at sea.

In fact, such tales were told (no doubt in fun)
About his clever programme of reform,
The clever programme that he left half-done
To iron out all deflections from the norm,
As seamen lash things down to face a storm
And clear the decks. All such things must be.
And then men blush at their own nudity.

One trick, was a great irrigation scheme,
Enough to tame half Nature, grab her power
(One half technology and one half dream
Needless to say): might make the desert flower
Regular as a clock that strikes the hour.
Yet, to what end? Why, washing down a byre
Seemed to be the limit of poor Clubman's desire.

So it often was, through to the end—
The muscle willing, but the mind all weak.
At his insistence, Fate (or Chance?) would send
Just what he sought. But just what did he seek?
He hardly knew. Any old ruling clique,
Any new smart agent could tell him what to need:
They'd thought it out, you see; and he agreed.

Not always though. That smoke could turn to fire.
He killed his music master as a child
In a cross fit, struck him with a lyre,
And often in his manhood he went wild
And was the death of someone—and got reviled
By those who made the shallow diagnosis:
Wanted the heroics, didn't want the neurosis.

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His own host, Pholus, met a wretched end
From Clubman; then he made Eunomus bleed
To death, and Chiron too, his oldest friend
(So good a rider he half seemed the steed)
And Iphitus: three years' penance was decreed . . .
So it went on, regular as a dance:
The murder, then the grand deliverance.

Old things come round again. (And then some don't:
A theme by all and sundry out of Vico.)
Clubman acquired renown by use and wont,
Nobody thought to scrutinize his Ego,
Or see his heroism as vertigo,
Or saintly humility and frenzied rage
The epitome of the human average.

Among the rest, he would of course pursue
Pleasures of sex: and here, could hardly fail.
Well, all that's—natural: look, grave pigeons do,
Down in the park all day, female and male,
So Nature pricks them both about the tail.
But even Plato told us that this could
Be the Great Stair to lead the soul to God.

It was for Clubman: not how Plato meant.
When the first brood sprawled killed, he shed a tear
—Half-uncomprehendingly—and went
Out into exile. There he spent twelve year.
Yet next thing, he beat down Hippolyte,
And sought Iole: but her brothers declined
Kinship (save one) with a hero of unsound mind.

Which was unsound of them. He made away
With one and all. Though once he'd been their slave,
And treadled in the house of Omphale,
Who'd played the lord and husband's part, and gave
Him wool to card—Clubman, who'd been so brave.
Who knows, though, what he may have learnt within
That birdlike woman's world, quick, strange to man?

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Not much I think. He must have known before.
Wise doctors make it plain that each man keeps
A woman in him, hid behind the door
Shut on the past where, like a ghost, she sleeps.
Memories swim up sunwards from the deeps . . .
Snakes in a pram . . . what average hero but
Must twin both sexes in one subtle knot?

Or why else was it, when that young boy fell
Over the side of the ship, and seen no more,
Clubman went blind and inconsolable,
Wandering and crying three days down the shore
Like a lost gull? Was that the son he bore
Into the world with so much pain, and nursed?
Was that the lover that he had known the first?

Toiling for Omphale it may have been
He wove the very self-same glittering shirt
That brought such trouble to his own last queen.
Bloody with secret dye it was, and hurt
Like fire; and stretched her man out in the dirt
Like a worm trodden on. Yet how could she
Know this, would be the cure for jealousy?

A dying man upon a dying horse
Brought down by Clubman, when he could not stir
(Saying it would keep her husband true to course)
Tapped his own venomed blood and gave it her.
Clubman had been a crazed philanderer.
Neither foresaw the appalling swift result,
No one's to blame to be so much at fault,

No one had the secret of the fiendish mesh:
But Dejaneira could not bear to see
It bite his skin and tear away his flesh
And went and hanged herself upon a tree.
Weeping to think that even this would be
No good. Clubman was burnt by his own son.
Hero. Murderer. Simpleton. Average Man.

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JOSEPH KERMAN

Orpheus and the Neoclassic Vision of Opera

Io la Musica son, ch'ai dolci accenti
so far tranquillo ogni turbato core,
ed or di nobil' ira ed or d'amore
poss' infiammar le più gelate menti.
—The Prologue, Music, in Monteverdi's *Orfeo*

In the sixteenth century, for the first time, the problems of musical expressivity became central for many theorists and composers; here as elsewhere, the Renaissance contributes the essential modern point of view. Long before the first classicizing opera librettos, humanists had insisted that if music in ancient times had imitated and stirred the emotions with matchless power, it could and should do so again. Long before the first operas, by Peri and Caccini, musicians had experimented copiously with the means of emotional expression. The dominant musical form was the madrigal, a short vocal piece bound intimately to its poem—at best, and most characteristically, to a Petrarchan sonnet, an isolated stanza from Ariosto, or a lyric by Tasso. The huge tradition of the Italian madrigal, from Cipriano de Rore to Luca Marenzio and Claudio Monteverdi, determined the expressive course of music during the last half of the *cinquecento*.

The ultimate step, perhaps an inevitable one, was from the lyric to the dramatic: music was to step on to the stage, as Monteverdi's Prologue does, in order to inflame variously even *le più gelate menti*, the most frigid of minds. To attain its most far-reaching influence, music had to aspire to the high form of drama. In many ways Monteverdi cuts off sharply from Cipriano de Rore and Palestrina, but the continuity is also clear; the first great opera composer was also the last great madrigalist. Musical drama was the last and most extreme product of the sixteenth century's faith in the moving power of music.

To the humanists and those who shared their enthusiasms at

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second hand, evidence for the great power of music was everywhere convincing. They knew that the Greek lyrics had been sung, and likewise the tragedies themselves—certainly in part, if not entirely. In 1585 the *Oedipus Tyrannus* was performed in Venice with the choruses confidently set to music by the most celebrated madrigalist of the city, Andrea Gabrieli. But an even deeper inspiration was to be found in the musical stories revered by classic authors—by Plato himself, who would have banished certain modes of music as too powerful, too dangerous for the well-being of the state. Great musical exploits are told of Amphion and Eunomus, Terpander and Timotheus, Pan and Apollo. The legend of the Thracian singer and demi-God Orpheus is especially well developed, problematic and rich, and is remarkable for the simple beauty of its action. Already in its classic sources the myth is half-way to the dramatic form in which Politian and Ottaviano Rinuccini, Lope de Vega, Monteverdi and Gluck, Cocteau, Milhaud, and Stravinsky were subsequently tempted to shape it.

The lasting myths contain in them the lasting problems of man. The myth of Orpheus, furthermore, deals with man specifically as artist, and one is drawn inevitably to see in it, mirrored with a kind of proleptic vision, the peculiar problems of the opera composer. Initially Orpheus is the supreme lyric artist. In the classic view he is the ideal of the prize-winning *kitharista*—or, in Christian allegory, the evangelical psalmist who charmed the melancholy Saul. To the fourteenth century, he is the minstrel who exacts his boon from the Fairy King; to the sixteenth, perhaps, the madrigalist; to the nineteenth, proud Walther who persuades the German pedants. The eighteenth century painted him, tremulously, as the amiable singer of Metastasio's faint verses who entranced the King of Spain. But for Orpheus the lyric singer, the crisis of life becomes the crisis of his lyric art: art must now move into action, on to the tragic stage of life. It is a sublime attempt. Can its symbolic boldness have escaped the musicians of 1600, seeking new power in the stronger forms of drama? Orpheus' new triumph is to fashion the lament that harrows hell out of his own great sorrowing emotion—this too they must have specially marked, wrestling as they were with new emotional means, harrowing, dangerous to manage. But the fundamental conflict of the myth transcends that time and this medium, and extends to

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every artist. It is the problem of emotion and its control, the summoning of feeling to an intensity and communicability and form which the action of life heeds and death provisionally respects. All this Orpheus as artist achieves. But as man he cannot shape his emotions to Pluto's shrewd decree; face to face with the situation, he looks back, and fails. Life and art are not necessarily one.

The quality of Orpheus' failure here is obscure in the myth, but for the dramatist it is the crux of the matter. Around it, Monteverdi and Gluck attempted to crystallize the very different dramatic ideas that guide their versions of the legend. We shall try to understand and gauge the quality of their success, or failure. To be sure, this "problem of control" is an abstraction; few artists, and certainly not Monteverdi or Gluck, have drawn so clean and scientific an issue. Nor did Orpheus, in the simple, unelaborated myth. It is the dramatist's task to clarify the issue for Orpheus. The critic's is to clarify the parallel issue, the artist's problem of control; not for the dramatist, but for an audience which needs to grasp the dramatist's methods in order to share his vision.

II

The first two operas that have been preserved are settings by Peri and Caccini of *L'Euridice*, a pastoral play by Ottaviano Rinuccini, the Florentine humanist poet of Count Bardi's *camerata*. The first great opera is Monteverdi's *La Favola d'Orfeo*, written at Mantua in 1607; and *Orfeo* is the first opera to reveal the characteristic composer's struggle with the libretto. The composer is the dramatist, and his particular powers will determine the integrity of the drama. From his point of view, then, those elements in the libretto which suit his powers can be realized; other elements are either triumphantly distorted, or don't matter, or defeat him. In the end, the libretto is the limitation. But from another point of view, it is usually true that the composer's powers have hardly been shown beforehand, and come out only in the musical setting of the libretto. In the beginning, the libretto is the inspiration.

So it was with Monteverdi. He was not a master of recitative who went to Alessandro Striggio for a libretto to incorporate this special strength. Striggio, let us say, brought him the book; and, in setting it, Monteverdi discovered recitative—he did not invent it, but in the deepest sense he certainly discovered it. From then

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on recitative was his greatest achievement. It forms the basis for *Orfeo*, and completely dominates and determines his masterpiece of thirty-five years later, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*.

Recitative is one of the fundamental, constant elements of operatic dramaturgy. But actually it already began to decay into convention with Monteverdi's pupils, and in spite of impressive renewals in later centuries, it has never been used again with Monteverdi's confidence, imagination, and conviction. As a result, it is hard for us today to think of recitative as anything but second best, a necessary link between arias. In 1600, however, there was as yet no concept of the considered emotional experience that later composers were to elaborate in purely musical forms—Bach in the fugue, Beethoven in the symphony, Handel and Verdi in the aria. It remained for Gluck to bring this modern concept of musical coherence to the Orpheus legend; Monteverdi understood nothing of it; in the tradition that he knew, musical expressivity was directed only to the painting of moods and images in madrigals. Now there was a stronger, more specifically neoclassic ideal: music instead should imitate the accents of passionate speech as best represented by the grand, exaggerated rhetoric of a great actor. Music should follow the cadence and thus the moving implication of the individual word, with little heed to the phrase, the sentence, or even the total feeling. The result was recitative, tumbling emotion, a continuing heart-cry, undistanced, "the naked human voice" behind the measured voice of the poet. Its magnificence and immediacy stem exactly from its impulsive nature, from its lack of forming control.

Monteverdi met this ideal with a perfect genius for declamation; words formed themselves musically for him. And to whip the recitative line into passion, he harrowed every available musical means for tension. Declamation guided him to sudden halts and spurting cascades in rhythm, and to precipitous, intense rises and falls in melodic line. Though he sometimes juxtaposes chords in radical ways, his basic harmonies are generally simple; harmonic tension is implemented by dissonance between the voice and the chords below. Occasionally he even emphasizes violent dissonance above a harmony without any suggestion of relief (in technical terms resolution, passage into calmer consonance). Or when, more usually, he does resolve dissonance, the effect may be partial and

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bitter, or else compromised with new subsidiary tensions introduced in passing by searing extra-harmonic notes. The great advantage of the modern monodic style of the 1600's, the "new music," was that the voice could range unencumbered above the *basso continuo*, which all alone provided a simple harmonic support. Rhythm, line, and dissonance were actually freed for the most expressive contortions; in the essential simplicity of the total texture, they could not destroy the clear, quiet authority of the bass.

Monteverdi's use of syncopation is particularly striking. Syncopation is rhythmic tension, just as dissonance is harmonic tension; traditionally the two had been carefully used together, mainly for the purpose of strengthening a coming cadence. But Monteverdi made syncopation of the recitative line into a positive mannerism, producing a curious sense of ready displacement, a latitude that allows the singer to drag or rush irrespective of the sober metrical beat.

It is as though the singer were in such transports that he can no longer restrain himself to the artifice of the steadily marching bass; and when the bass is also erratic, there is a remarkable sense of flexibility, torsion, and expressivity to the whole complex. The musician tries to capture the metrical fluidity of poetry, poetry as spoken on the stage. The result is a declamatory style of unexampled raw emotionality.

This art of recitative is what Monteverdi brought to the story of Orpheus, an artist who could move hell by his grief, a lover who could not dominate his passions. Striggio's libretto does everything to refine a view of Orpheus as an unreflective creature of impulse, acting strongly and with the greatest instinctive bravery. In the first act we hear him only briefly, breaking into the Arcadian atmosphere with an enthusiastic hymn to the Sun, rejoicing in his success at finally winning Eurydice. But in Act II the pastoral tone is shattered by a most explosive Messenger, Silvia, "*ninfa gentile*," who suddenly and for the first time reveals the full force of Monteverdi's recitative. Her superb, rapid lament acts as a kind of trigger for Orpheus' emotion; his part in this act is also small, an abrupt, intense, half-unconscious decision to seek Eurydice in Hades. In Act III he is on the bank of Styx with Hope, who must leave him, to his very articulate distress. Hopeless, he nonetheless

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sings a huge formal lament to Charon; the lament breaks off into an informal plea which is even more impassioned, and which does at last gain him admission. Rather ambiguously, though: Charon, evidently a half-comic character, is still adamant, but falls asleep (like Cerberus in mythology). In Act IV, when Eurydice is released, the drama quickens as it reveals Orpheus' rather terrible insufficiency. His reaction is neither gratitude nor real affection, but a hymn of praise to himself and to his lyre. Fearing that Eurydice may be snatched back, he turns fitfully to see her, as much out of over-confidence as for love. When she fades away from him, he utters another piercing cry, such as Monteverdi alone could handle in recitative. How inadequate Gluck is at this place, in the heat of the moment! Monteverdi's Orpheus is agonized, and the Infernal Chorus mercifully cuts him off.

This chorus observes that success comes only to those who can moderate their feelings, a moral which indeed is spoken by everybody: by a Spirit who warns of *giovenil desio* as he fetches Eurydice, by Eurydice herself in her dying words "*Cosi per troppo amor . . .*," and in the next act by Apollo *ex machina*, who echoes her speech and further rebukes his son: "*Non è consiglio / di generoso petto / servir al proprio affetto.*" But Orpheus learns nothing. In Act V, before Apollo comes to him, he is lamenting again in Thrace, with more intensity than ever, but with scarcely any higher awareness. And his subsequent ascent to heaven is more or less meaningless, the most disappointing thing in the opera.

To distinguish between the attitudes of the librettist and those of the composer is often hard. Striggio was experimenting, just as Monteverdi was. While the first act of the libretto is purely lyric in quality, like the *Euridice* of Rinuccini, the later acts show striking dramatic tendencies, especially by contrast with Rinuccini. But Striggio did nothing to bridge the gap between Orpheus' heroic achievements in song or action and the callow impulse (to consider it coldly) which is his only response to them. In a libretto, poetry can do nothing for Orpheus; even if Striggio had the poetic art, he lacked the time and the form. But through Monteverdi's recitative, impulse becomes passion; it is impossible to consider Orpheus coldly. What seems in the book to be instinct or caprice becomes under the pressure of the music an absolutely compelling emotion, so that we are no more in doubt of Orpheus' integrity

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than are the wild beasts of Thrace and the creatures of Hades whom he likewise sways. A libretto provides a framework, bu the essential dramatic articulation is provided by the music. By means of Monteverdi's recitative, Striggio's blank or contradic tory character attains tragic reality.

Monteverdi also grasped the need for elements to bind and weight the primary texture of recitative, to control it from the outside, since it knew no inner restraint. He used short songs, brief orchestral sections called *ritornelli* or *sinfonie,* and choruses ranging in style from serious madrigals to light fa-la's. None is very expressive in itself, indeed many can be said to be awkward, neutral, and antiquated; but they make a perfect ballast for the form. In the task of dramatic construction, Monteverdi was helped by having a poem shaped along bold, simple lines. Striggio appears to have worked from a sort of ideal scheme for an act, a scheme which forms itself during Acts I and II, reaches full articulation in Acts III and IV, and decays in Act V. His tendency was to start each act with a static situation, follow it by a single important action, show Orpheus' reaction to it, and then sum up in a choral conclusion. Especially the great Infernal Chorus, flanked by the trombones and *cornetti* which alone survive in Monteverdi's hell, beautifully reflects the success of Orpheus in Act III, and then his failure in Act IV. The solemn Venetian madrigal polyphony, stiffly controlled as though sculptured, answers and deepens the impassioned voice. *Orfeo* shows a wonderful sense of clear dramatic movement; Striggio had not studied and translated Greek plays for nothing. And Monteverdi, past master of the highly developed choral art of the sixteenth century, was able to give the chorus, in particular, a dramatic importance second only to that of the recitative.

As I have said, one virtue of the libretto is that it gives Orpheus many occasions to react violently in moments of crisis: the news of Eurydice's death, the departure of Hope, the rejection by Charon, the return of Eurydice, and her second death. These moments are precisely suited to Monteverdi's power, and mark indelibly the character of the drama. But at two crucial points in the play, Orpheus is confronted with the necessity of dealing with considered feeling after the moment of pain has passed; he is to summon up all his art, his control, to comprehend pain in a purer

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onsciousness. For a later composer, these would have been natural 'aria situations."

The first of them is the formal lament to Charon; and Monte-'erdi, who could not write a true aria, triumphantly distorted he libretto. Striggio wrote six tercets of *terza rima*—knowing that Monteverdi was usually very respectful of poetic form. Monte-'erdi set the first four tercets as an increasingly brilliant musical lisplay, with fabulous coloratura for the singer, broken by ornate instrumental interludes. But as this does not impress Charon, Orpheus forgets himself abruptly and delivers the fifth tercet as a free and (in context) doubly piercing recitative. Then, by a wonderful inspiration, the final tercet is completely calm, without coloratura or passion; Orpheus and the instruments come together for the only time in the opera, in a style vaguely ecclesiastical, part-music to which Orpheus kneels with the viols, exposing most purely the quiet bass pattern which had united the earlier stanzas. Charon is indeed stony-hearted. With intolerable passion, the recitative plea is resumed, culminating in the famous refrain "*Rendetemi il mio ben, Tartarei Numi!*" As Orpheus enters Charon's boat, the Infernal Chorus speaks its sober sentence:

Nulla impresa per uom si tenta invano
Nè contr' a lui più sa Natura armarse . . .

No undertaking of man is tried in vain,
Nor can Nature arm against him further . . .

The other aria-situation is of course the scene in Act V, which begins with a fifty-line lament for the despairing Orpheus. Striggio built the passage metrically to a pulsing climax; apparently the idea was to carry Orpheus forward from mere depression and bantering with his echo, to a state of ecstasy in which he could sing a hymn (at last) to Eurydice. It is worth emphasizing that previously Orpheus has sung only in praise of his success in winning her, and then again in praise of his lyre. But Striggio's long lament turned out to be one of those elements in a libretto which defeat a composer. Monteverdi's recitative is perhaps never so impassioned and powerful as here, but he had no way to present the more serene vision that Orpheus may be expected to attain as he looks back on events from the Thracian fields. Monteverdi

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must have been dimly conscious of a "problem of control" i recitative. He attempted to organize it by means of refrains, s quences, rhythmic and melodic goals, even sometimes by a so of tonal plan, and most strikingly by loose repetitive structure i the bass. That is, the free flow of the declamation is unified by th repetition in the bass of a fairly extensive pattern. Even this d vice, however, does not produce the cohesion of musical substanc that gives consistency to emotional effect. Recitative is still to bound to the words; the technique of the aria was not yet d veloped. Having learned nothing, Orpheus is still reacting o impulse.

And when the force of instant passion fails for Orpheus, Monte verdi was at a loss for a further action or a final comment. I se no reason to doubt that Monteverdi saw into the delicate balanc between character and action implicit in a drama. He was abl to develop Orpheus' character in music so that his actions hav dignity and sense; Orpheus' failure in Act IV begins to touch u tragically. But in the implied tragic end of an Orpheus play, there is another necessary balance: between the consciousness that grows in the hero and the tragic fate for which this prepares him, and which it lets him then transcend. Orpheus must somehow rise to meet, or deserve, or require the tragic fate. This progress Monteverdi could not show. So the conclusion of the opera was a serious problem, and Monteverdi's apotheosis is as blank musically as it is intellectually. But at least it is an act, and ends the piece efficiently; that is more than Striggio would have done; he meant originally to bring in the Bacchantes, but unlike Politian did not venture to offend the court by having them tear Orpheus. Monteverdi, we may well imagine, would have nothing to do with this undramatic prevarication. Even if Orpheus could not be shown to progress in Act V, dramatic form demanded some full action, some solid realization in terms of plot. Custom would not have deterred Monteverdi from carrying through Striggio's hint of tragedy if he had wished. Perhaps he refused to do so on account of an instinct of his own limitation.

Apotheosizing Apollo has no personality at all. But earlier, there have been beautifully pure little pictures of minor characters. The first is the passionate Messenger of Act II, who, after Orpheus has sung and left, continues her tremendous lament, self-centered

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as the hero himself, even infecting the Nymphs and Shepherds with her recitative refrain. In the next act, an even smaller role, parallel in function to that of the Messenger, is Charon; grotesque, scabrous, bitter with memories of violation and deceit. After Orpheus' song, Charon grumbles over the same bass pattern that had accompanied his original outburst; he is touched but determined not to budge. The vivid consistency of characterization and the opportunity provided for Orpheus to intensify his plea more than make up for Charon's unlikely drowsiness. He is a genuine test both of Orpheus' bravery and of the power of song.

Finally, there is the earnest figure of Music, who sings a simple strophic song as Prologue. She carries on her shoulders the artistic anxiety of the time. As, at the end, her song changes from gay to sad and she charges the birds and waves and winds to silence themselves, we wonder—will they yield in Mantua, as once they did in Thrace? Twice during the course of the drama Music is heard to return, as though to enquire and encourage, dumbly through the viols of her original ritornello. Can passion move into action? In Vienna in 1762 the issue was again to be in doubt, in a new atmosphere of experimentation with the means of musical expression. The matter was still not to be settled unequivocally.

III

What Music had learned in a hundred and fifty years is shown swiftly by the opening scene of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Gluck plunges at once into the heart of the story with a funeral chorus for Eurydice, a somber musical block of the sort that Monteverdi knew well how to manipulate, though the tone here recalls rather Rameau. But neither Monteverdi nor Rameau could have conceived the part of Orpheus during this chorus. Sporadically, he utters three slow cries of the one word "*Euridice*"; he seems unaware of the mourners' presence, but it is the heavy, formed, ritual pattern of their dirge that sets off his uncontrolled and lacerating emotion. This is the first of many magnificent inspirations in this opera; Gluck must have congratulated himself on the classical economy whereby twelve notes sufficed to set Orpheus' broken grief. The point, however, is in what follows. After Orpheus asks to be left alone, the chorus departs, repeating most of its music, but he is now silent, contemplating. Then at once he begins his first

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aria, "*Chiamo il mio ben così*"—the elegy is sung by Orpheus in this opera, not by the chorus, as in Monteverdi's. Orpheus is equal to it; his previous inarticulate wailing is transformed to a tranquillity beyond anything that Monteverdi could achieve. Through his two utterances, Orpheus is shown to pull himself together, to a point where grief is viewed and understood, no longer lived, but not shunned either. He transcends his sorrow by controlling it into song.

This art of control was what had been learned: the art of the aria, after recitative the second of the two fundamental elements of operatic dramaturgy. Composers now could take a momentary sentiment and project it as a realized emotion rather than as an impulsive flash of passion in the manner of Monteverdi. Ideally the lyric aria comprehends a full, considered experience, and fixes it by means of musical form. Of course the modulation of lyricism into drama has been much misused, in *The Medium* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* and even *Don Giovanni*, as well as in the countless Metastasian *Didones* and *Egistos* of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the aria or some lyric substitute for the aria has become the prime power of musical drama, and no one has ever understood its function better than Gluck.

In a sense, of course, every work of art, every aria, is its own form; but when standard patterns grow up, one can trace roughly the characteristic kinds of feeling to which they correspond. In Gluck's time aria form was extremely elaborate—I do not say complicated, for that would imply a psychological depth which musicians did not yet know how to sound, but elaborate, highly decorative, ruminative and elegant, exhaustive and exhausting. Feeling was attenuated to the destruction of drama. When Gluck wrote arias of stark formal simplicity, new truth and intensity of emotional expression came with the force of a revelation. This imaginative realization of the aria remains the greatest of Gluck's much-discussed "reforms."

Form can always be analyzed profitably up to a point, if never up to the ultimate point. "*Chiamo il mio ben così*," Orpheus' first aria, is merely three identical strophes in a perfectly plain binary arrangement: 9 + 4 bars to the dominant key and 11 + 6 bars back to the tonic, with a positive minimum of other harmonies, no *ritornello*, and as adornment only a one-bar upbeat and ex-

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quisitely balancing echoes. These strophes correspond to the stiffly parallel three stanzas of the elegy. Between them are two epistrophes, in which the poet Calzabigi's conceit was to have the name Eurydice echoed by woods and glades, according to the best pastoral cliché. But there is a deeper echo: of Orpheus' initial lament with the mourning chorus. Gluck set the epistrophes as meditative, highly organized recitatives with echoes; and the very fact that the orchestra now always answers Orpheus' invocations of "*Euridice*" distances and forms his grief and illuminates the extent of his progress. The recitatives do introduce some richer harmonies, shifting tonally—the first to minor tonic and dominant, the second back through both mediants. One can grasp the economy and consistency of this scheme, and also the sophisticated irregularity of phrasing which alone could save it from banality. But in the end Gluck's celebrated purity of line and infallible nobility of musical conception are among the hardest things to "explain" in all music. Handel, the greatest of traditional opera composers, said that his cook had a greater command of counterpoint than the Chevalier Gluck. Perhaps so. Gluck was no more interested in the organ loft than in the kitchen; his iron control was over the means to far different spiritual pleasures.

The aria, for all its abuses, was the great strength of early eighteenth-century opera—its only strength, one is inclined to say. The aria is also the cornerstone of Gluck's operatic edifice. In recitative he pales beside Monteverdi; the genre had become conventionalized, decorous, and stilted. To be sure, Gluck worked hard to strike flame out of recitative, and, especially in the operas from *Alceste* on, achieved a certain force with it. But he did so, characteristically, by building recitative towards the aria: first by orchestrating it up to the level of the arias, and then by binding it as firmly as possible by means of accompaniment texture, tonal scheme, bass pattern, or general rhythmic pulse. Exactly these devices make it impossible for recitative to render the instant passion that its original master had so dearly loved. Most successful, in Gluck's *Orfeo*, are the tightly echo-bound recitatives within the first aria, "*Chiamo il mio ben così*," and the sublime climactic arioso (almost an aria) for Orpheus in the Elysian Fields, "*Che puro ciel.*" Something can be said too for the passages of angry declamation tied up with *tremoli* and decisive motives (in Act III,

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with Eurydice; in Act I right after the aria, as Orpheus rages a the gods and thinks of going to Hades; again at the end as he re solves). But these passages cannot be compared in emotional forc to the lyric expression of the arias and choruses; the most impres sive recitative is always at an unfair disadvantage in such company Gluck's recitatives cannot convince us of Orpheus' fury and pair in the way that Monteverdi's do.

Understanding this, perhaps, Calzabigi presented Gluck with a libretto containing a minimum of situations in which Orpheus is shown to act on impulse. The arrangement is exactly opposite to that of Alessandro Striggio working for Monteverdi; here everything is maturely reasoned. In Act I, Orpheus is mourning at leisure, and is disturbed by no disruptive Messenger. He does think of going to Hades, but not as a momentary impulse, and the initial thought is not the decision; even after Cupid comes to support him, Orpheus debates the matter before making up his mind. It will be a difficult task, for will Eurydice accept the condition that he shall not look at her? He fears the worst, but nonetheless resolves to go. The contrast with Striggio is striking in Act III, at the crux where Orpheus regains Eurydice. Far from stemming from over-confidence and lack of restraint, the catastrophe is promoted by a very vibrant Eurydice, who goads her husband at great length to turn. Orpheus, who has been steeling himself for this ever since Act I, resists heroically as the scene drags on. They sing a duet at cross purposes; Eurydice sings a proud, passionate aria refusing to follow him under what she takes to be his condition of abstinence. They dispute repeatedly in recitative, the quality of which seems to emphasize the nagging hopelessness of the conflict. At last Orpheus turns to her, with the full consciousness of self-sacrifice, and she dies. For a moment he rages (unconvincingly); then, once again, with a superhuman effort, distils his grief into song. "*Che farò senza Euridice?*", the second and last aria for Orpheus, brings him again on top of his feelings, comprehending them, refining them, projecting them in artistic form. Hanslick's famous objection that the piece does not sound instantly gloomy misses the essential point: the aria is beyond grief, and represents a considered solution, a response to the catastrophe.

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Can we believe this accomplishment, this fantastic self-control in the face of disaster? The aria is constructed as a sort of undeveloped rondo, with the grand melody and the words "*Che farò senza Euridice? / dove andrò senza il mio ben?*" sung three times almost identically, but with increasingly beautiful effect. Between these appearances are brief, tuneless episodes hingeing (once again) on a bare cry to the name of Eurydice; and these recall again the inarticulate grief of Orpheus at the very beginning of the opera. Thus within this aria, Calzabigi and Gluck write the same progress as between the opening mourning chorus and the succeeding elegy. Even in form, "*Che farò senza Euridice?*" is something like an intense compression of "*Chiamo il mio ben così.*" The process of sublimation is repeated now on a higher plane of action, if not perhaps of awareness.

The clearest clue to Gluck's conception, however, is in the *Gestalt* of Act II. This is perhaps the most moving and perfect act in all opera, and perhaps the simplest. The first half shows the gradual success of Orpheus' plea to the Furies; the second shows him transported to the Elysian Fields, where, as though in a dream, Eurydice is returned to him just before the curtain.[1] For the taming of the Furies, Gluck did not write an aria for Orpheus, as even Monteverdi had done; in Gluck's sternly consistent scheme, Orpheus' arias are occasions for spiritual exposition, and this was not quite the place for one. Orpheus is already composed, master of the situation; he sings a long tranquil arioso, modest, manly, and clear-eyed; he will prevail by the frank force of his personality or not at all. Even the terrifying repeated "*No!*" of the Furies cannot urge him into special pleading, coloratura, or rhetoric. Gently his harp accompaniment and his vocal line expand and intensify, but essentially his success is articulated by the decreasing force of the Furies' replies; Orpheus has only to hold his own. Needless to say, he does not (like Monteverdi's hero) forget himself magnificently for impromptu recitatives. Nor is there jubila-

[1] Later, in Paris, Gluck expanded both halves by adding three wonderful numbers, among others: the Dance of the Furies, the Dance of the Spirits for flute, in d minor, and the Chorus of Spirits led by a soprano soloist, "*Cet asile aimable.*" So far as I can judge, these numbers slow the action without altering it significantly. In this discussion I follow the original Italian version because it is purer in dramatic construction. I should not, however, wish to sacrifice the many improvements of detail in the French version.

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tion as the Furies cede and convey him to the Elysian Fields. His reaction is of serene wonder, approaching worship, and his longing for Eurydice seems even further chastened.

It was remarkable of Calzabigi to have put in the Elysian Fields, Vergil or no Vergil; but obviously Gluck wanted them, and made this scene into the opera's unforgettable climax. Its dramatic meaning, then, is of literally first importance. Certainly the scene is not intended to place Eurydice; the lady we see in the next act does not fit in Elysium, and we can only imagine her maintained there by means of the Stygian draught. But Orpheus manifestly does belong there. The whole aspiration of his spirit is realized in the glittering gray light of Gluck's perfect heaven, where passion has been finally purified away. Orpheus responds to the vision of Elysium with a calm rapture comparable to that of Winckelmann before a Tuscan ruin:

> *Che puro ciel, che chiaro sol,*
> *che nuova serena luce è questa mai! . . .*

The orchestra unfolds a great arioso held together by a sublime oboe melody and by rustling flutes and violins around it. Some such harmony, seven-stringed, Aeneas in search of Anchises was to hear Orpheus strike from his lyre. Orpheus lingers; he is loath to leave; he thinks of Eurydice, to be sure, but the scene is organized by the sounds of heaven, not by those of earth and love. Eurydice herself has nothing to say (and it is a bad mistake in the French version to give her the part of the Happy Spirit in "*Cet asile aimable*"). Obviously, the scene-change to the Elysian Fields comes as a great relief after the tension of the Furies in the earlier part of the act. Thus in the deepest sense, Orpheus' reward for the beauty of his song and his heroism is Elysium, not Eurydice. We trust first what is most emphatic in the music.

For Gluck's thoroughly Vergilian paragon, this other-worldliness comes as easily as self-control and aesthetic sensibility. His virtue has been exposed gradually under the stress of a stately series of events. But towards the end we begin to remark that obstacles are transcended rather than overcome, that the power of Orpheus' art is directed within himself rather than out into the action which it is said to regulate. There is something extraor-

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dinary about his passive response to Eurydice's reproaches, though he is as always correct, guided by reason, and not a little saintly. He makes no more effort to meet her on her terrestrial plane than she to meet him on his. Though things are more dramatic—supremely so—as Orpheus summons everything together for "*Che farò senza Euridice?*", yet there is almost a sense of relief to the song; his heart is not in the conflict, but in his own lyric introspection. To be sure, in this he is only being true to the ideal of the lyric singer and to that of the eighteenth-century operatic hero. But in the end Orpheus is in danger of ennobling himself out of the realm of dramatic action. In the state of beatitude to which he tends, mundane conflict seems trivial, and the dramatist's energy seems wasted.

How then could the action relevantly conclude? A tragic ending would be as inappropriate as in Monteverdi's opera, though for a different reason: to have torn apart this perfect hero would have been an act of unnecessary and meaningless brutality. Oddly enough, Monteverdi's apotheosis would have made good sense here. But Gluck was probably confused enough by his hero's tentative leanings towards the religious. The simplest thing was to set the fatuous "effective" conclusion that lay before him in Calzabigi's book.

So Gluck's forming idea of sublimation could no more consummate the drama than Monteverdi's forming sense of passion. After "*Che farò senza Euridice?*", Calzabigi has Orpheus decide to kill himself—as ambiguous an act as could have been conceived. (There is nothing ambiguous, however, about the glorious line of melody which Gluck inserted at the end of his recitative, "*Si, aspetta, o cara ombra dell' Idol mio*"; even in this rash deed, Gluck seems anxious to assure us, Orpheus is fully conscious of his condition.) The suicide is interrupted by the return of Cupid, who explains that everything has been a trial; Orpheus picks Eurydice off the floor for a moment of general embarrassment, and then a chorus gaudily cheers the re-uniting of the incompatible pair. Their hymn to love has nothing to do with the true merits of the case; but the conclusion is worse than irrelevant, for it tries to deny that there ever had been any drama. Fortunately, I think nobody in the theater will credit that or any other pretension of

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this conventional excuse for a dramatic solution. Gluck also gives up the ghost at the crux of *Alceste*; the *Iphigenias* and *Armide* end better.

IV

Heroic opera, the quintessential art form of the baroque, had its beginning when Monteverdi showed suddenly what the form was worth. The great tradition came to an end when Gluck transformed it, and transformed it in his own terms. Orpheus begins and ends an era. The era embraces many neoclassicisms: the late humanism of Count Bardi's *camerata* and the Mantuan court; the *grand siècle* order of Lully and Quinault; the delightful, preposterous fantasy of the Arcadian Academy, with Creacimbeni, Farinelli, and Metastasio; the serene Roman ideal of Goethe, Winckelmann, and Gluck. At every point someone had a vague vision of a modern analogy to the Greek drama; and musical drama somehow came into being. Between the time of Monteverdi and that of Gluck, recitative erupted and decayed, while the aria developed, overdeveloped, and finally realized itself. It was the time of the true classical tradition of opera.

The lyre of Orpheus extends its charm even further back, to Peri and Caccini in 1600, and even farther forward, almost to 1800: an *Orpheus* written for London by Joseph Haydn (but never performed) was among the very last of the *opere serie*, decrepit and long past its time. Orpheus' dramatic conflict falls easily into the favorite baroque formulation of instinct and duty, emotion and reason, "love and honor." But a special fascination for the opera composer lay in the almost explicit parallel between Orpheus' action and Orpheus' art. The task for the artist is to assert a purifying control over the emotional source of art, to form and focus it until he can move hell—and also move the audience in the theater. For the man, the trial demands heroism beyond that of daring hell: it is to control his own flood of passion when finally Eurydice returns—and also to convince the audience of the integrity of his actions. With Monteverdi, for whom raw passion was the main reality, the conflict was never solved. With Gluck, whose reality was the sublimation of feeling, the conflict was less solved than passed over; sublimation brought him practically to the sublime, to Elysium. Gluck had reached a point of

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artistic sophistication at which the problem of emotional discipline was only too simply met; the danger was in losing the very roots of passion. Both dramatists failed in the ultimate task of articulation, lowering their expressive sights and frankly deflecting the conclusion.

Perhaps it was just as well; at least they assumed no more than they knew. The negative virtue stands out in contrast with the next curious operatic metamorphosis of the Orpheus idea, another hundred years later, at another period of expressive experimentation and "reform." In *Die Meistersinger*, Richard Wagner attacked the problem of control head on, specifically, and with his usual relentless enthusiasm. The singer who will not brook laws of art or of orderly bourgeois society is gently taught self-control and musical form, both together, by a higher being who rescues him as arbitrarily as Cupid or Apollo, but who insists on rationalizing the rescue. The complacent tale ends with an unearned hymn to German Art, as the fantastic dramatic machinery purrs to its calculated close. All questions are answered, but no serious ones have been asked; it is not hell that has to be appeased, but the pedants of Nuremberg and the journalists of Vienna. And blind, proud, instinctive Walther has none of Monteverdi's burning passion or of Gluck's heroic self-awareness. The dramatic life in *Die Meistersinger* lies in something that began as a counterpoint to the central idea and then gradually displaced it: the drama of Sachs. It is there, and in other operas, that Wagner asked his important questions.

"Die heil'ge deutsche Kunst"—"Fraw Musica" makes a substantial substitute for Monteverdi's shadowy Prologue. But the latter nonetheless remains to haunt our imagination. We imagine her, perhaps, restless on the bank of Styx with Orpheus as he pleads, vainly now, for another opportunity. Like Orpheus, she has her partial success, which is more meaningful than the full victory of others. Like Orpheus, she will continue to confront the dramatist with her elusive, animating challenge:

> I am Music, who with dulcet accents
> Knows to soothe each troubled heart,
> And now with passion, now with noble rage,
> My power can inflame the coldest mind.

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WILLIAM MEREDITH

Metropolitan Opera Chronicle

IN THE FIRST half of the nineteenth century Italian opera attained a greatness that many modern hearers are reluctant or unable to recognize. Mozart and the late or 'serious' Verdi, the Verdi of *Otello* and *Falstaff*, form a noble parenthesis around the era of Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini, whose music most people still think of as trivial or (in the words of Grandfather Adams) too up and down and twiddle-deedeedly.

One reason for our neglect of these composers, and for our patronizing underestimate of the few of their works that remain in the repertory, is that our critical standards are still Romantic: we do not easily associate greatness with a work of art whose primary purpose is to entertain. The indifference of Wagner and certain other nineteenth century giants to this obligation—the obligation to amuse their audience, which seems to have been primary with the Italians—has been a ponderous but effective reproach to these gayer works. Yet we have only to listen to them to realize that the best of them are masterpieces: for melodic invention, for vocal and orchestral brilliance, and for that overriding sense of energy which great art always conveys. The opulence of this school of opera no doubt owed something to Gluck and Mozart, and it has reached beyond its country and century, so that composers as diverse as Weber and Berlioz and Strauss are sweeter for it. The final flowering or the dying away gave us Puccini, Giordano and Cilea.

It is hardly too much to say that the tradition of Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini and early Verdi is the great tradition of opera, and in the past season it seems to have been the great one at the Metropolitan Opera. Notwithstanding Pierre Monteux' stylish and lyrical reading of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* which opened the season, Rudolph Kempe's fine *Rosenkavalier*, or the uneven but on the whole excellent performances accorded to three Mozart operas, the highlights of the season occurred in the Italian repertory.

The brilliance of certain individual performers had a good deal to do with these successes. But neither Tebaldi nor Bjoerling, Milanov nor Valetti, nor the guiding genius of Mitropoulos or Cleva obscured the fact that these eleven scores by Donizetti, Verdi, Puccini and Giordano are peculiarly viable as *operas*: they depend for success on musicians, which the Met is strong on, rather than on production where it is weak. With Wagner, Saint-Saëns or Mussorgsky one was aware of inadequate sets, discrepancies of acting technique, or unresolved problems of staging. (The Met still offers more stage business per evening than any place in New York except Madison Square Garden.) With

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he Italian works, because of a greater vitality in their musical conventions, only musical deficiencies seemed important. The vigor and integrity of these conventions takes precedence, in Italian opera, over dramatic considerations, allowing a degree of indifference to sets, staging and acting—even, some would say, to plot; always providing that the musical conventions are honored.

II

But with French opera, the production is of first importance, and the new *Tales of Hoffman*, with sets by Rolf Gerard and staged by Cyril Ritchard, had considerable flair. Musically it was even more distinguished, with a cast including Lucine Amara, Roberta Peters, Richard Tucker, Risë Stevens and Martial Singher, under the impeccable baton of Monteux. Miss Amara, whose fine performances this season included the roles of Mimi, Micaela, and Pamina, sang her best in this difficult part of Antonia. Mr. Singher's performance in the multiple baritone part was likewise his best of a successful season.

The three other French operas were marked by rather fusty productions and uneven performances. The operatic merits of Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* are at best elusive. Monteux and Risë Stevens did what they could to coax them out, but the vulgarity of Dino Yannopoulos' staging and Zachary Solov's choreography, and the uncertainty of Ramon Vinay's Samson, kept them from emerging. The *Fausts* and *Carmens* of the season were much better sung. Giuseppi di Stefano, returning after several years' absence, has retained his extremely beautiful and flexible tenor voice and, alas, his unmusical and slovenly use of it, so that his Faust was unpredictable. Jerome Hines' Mephistopheles had real style, and Nadine Conner and Dorothy Kirsten sang craftsmanlike Marguerites. Pierre Monteux, in his eighty-second year and his final season at the Met (he leaves not to retire but to conduct in Europe), educed what elegance and vitality can be got from Gounod's plodding score. Both Risë Stevens and Blanche Thebom performed effective *Carmens*, in which Lucine Amara and Frank Guarrera (or occasionally Robert Merrill) provided notable assistance. Di Stefano's Don José was uneven; Kurt Baum's reliable but uncomfortably forced in quality.

Three Wagner operas were performed. Rudolf Kempe made of *Die Meistersinger* a lighter event than Stiedry's of last year; while *Parsifal* had the incomparable advantage of Bruno Walter's conducting. The casting of *Lohengrin* (which Stiedry continues to lead at a pace one can only call Wagnerian) gave a hint as to how the management plans to cast the *Ring* next season. Eleanor Steber and Brian Sullivan were admirably at home in their new roles of Elsa and Lohengrin, supported by such old hands as Harshaw and Edelmann and the fine new Telramund of Hermann Uhde.

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A very brilliant *Rosenkavalier*, refurbished and launched late in the season, brought happily together Lisa della Casa, Hilde Gueden and Risë Stevens. Rudolf Kempe's conducting was lyrical and clean; it is good to note that Strauss' *Arabella* will be back next season, presumably again under his baton.

Boris Godunov returned after two years' absence, and Maestro Dimitri Mitropoulos shared the honors with three Borises familiar from 1953-4. With only one of these could one have hoped for improvement, and Jerome Hines is indeed now in a class with George London in this massive role; Cesare Siepi, who is probably the finest male singer at the Met, remains in a class by himself.

Of the three Mozart operas, *The Magic Flute* offered the only real novelty of production or casting. *Cosi Fan Tutte* was sung well by the familiar and excellent cast of Steber, Thebom, Munsel (or Peters), Valletti, Guarrera and Brownlee (or Alvary). *Le Nozze di Figaro* had a variety of casts in which Victoria de Los Angeles' Countess and Siepi's Figaro were the major triumphs.

The new *Magic Flute* was a complete musical success: Bruno Walter and a cast including eighteen of the company's best singers guaranteed that. The sets and costumes of Harry Horner seemed scaled for a smaller house and ran to the bizarre and the fussy. One marvels, too, that the old and rather arch Martin translation is still used when the Auden-Kallman version is available. But none of this mattered much when Mozart's and Bruno Walter's magic got under way. The high calibre of conducting at the Met has been a consistent excellence of the present management, and surely nowhere is excellence more important in the complex undertaking of operatic production.

III

Italian operas (and Mr. Bing is powerless to reform this) are starring vehicles. In front of the curtain, when the music has stopped, singers will smile and defer to one another; but as long as the opera is in motion they conform to the law of the ormolu jungle: they compete. This results in remarkable performances, performances which would not otherwise occur. It accounts, too, for a synthetic quality, a tameness, in recordings, which the bloodthirsty live-opera fan objects to; for in recordings only the orchestra is admitted to be hostile and is often shamefully discriminated against.

The new production in the Italian wing was Donizetti's little masterpiece *Don Pasquale*, and everything about it was alive, musical and genuine. Thomas Schippers made his debut as conductor, and if he was sometimes severe with the singers he achieved a brilliance and precision that did credit to everyone. Because the cast involves only four principals who are supposed to remain pretty much constantly agitated, Dino Yannopoulos' usual nervous stage effects were not in-

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appropriate. Wolfgang Roth's single set with a revolving center was charming and apt. The role of Ernesto might well have been written for the graceful and intelligent voice of Cesare Valletti, whose lyric tenor performances were flawless. Although his is a light voice, the management errs in restricting him to this opera and *Cosi Fan Tutte*, for except for Bjoerling he has no equal in the company.

Roberta Peters, the Norina, gave a new and superior account of herself throughout the past season. Her voice and her use of it have matured to the point where she is one of the rare coloraturas that one hears with real pleasure rather than anxiety or mere admiration. Her new successes included Gilda, Olympia, Lucia and the Queen of the Night. As with Mr. Valletti, there is also a stage presence which alone would recommend the voice if it were not already remarkable.

Frank Guarrera, who sang Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*, had his most versatile and successful season to date, but perhaps never exceeded his charm and musicianship in this undertaking. Fernando Corena as Pasquale was, like Valletti, what the composer might have dreamed of, as singer and comedian. A ballet called *Soirée* with Benjamin Britten's arrangement of Rossini as its score accompanied *Don Pasquale*. Mary Ellen Moylan and Oleg Briansky danced the gay and unpretentious choreography of Zachary Solov very beautifully. Cecil Beaton's sets and costumes and Schippers' conducting combined to make it the best dancing seen at the opera in many seasons—a modest enough encomium.

The greatest singing of this year, like last, was probably Renato Tebaldi's. She sang four *Aidas* under Fausto Cleva's sensitive direction strongly supported by Blanche Thebom or Elena Nikolaidi as Amneris and Ettore Bastianini as Amonasro. The young Italian tenor Mario Ortica who was introduced as Radames sang uncommonly badly all season. Dimitri Mitropoulos conducted Tebaldi's five heroic *Toscas*, three of them with Richard Tucker as a well-matched Cavaradossi and two with Giuseppi Campora's lighter voice but more plausible stage appearance. Leonard Warren sang Scarpia better than he acted it, and it remained for Tito Gobbi to sing and act the role to near perfection. Madame Tebaldi's other roles were Leonora in *La Forza del Destino* and two dazzling performances as Maddalena in *Andrea Chenier*.

As it happened, Zinka Milanov, the other great dramatic soprano in the company, also sang these four roles, with her own different but not inferior authority. The obvious clarity and accuracy of Tebaldi's voice, and her handsome stage presence, are advantages offset by Milanov's warmth and vocal color. If we say of Tebaldi's graceful music that it soars, Milanov's baroque voice requires another figure: it sits beautifully and improbably in the sky like those air-borne trolley-cars in Rousseau's prophetic pictures. The Italian diva departed mid-season, leaving Madame Milanov a clear field of their mutual roles as

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well as that of Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and her other superb Leonora, the heroine of *Il Trovatore*, which she sang in the final broadcast of the season.

This *Trovatore*, with its fifteen-year-old sets and with three of its four principals amply-proportioned old timers of the clutch-and-stagger school (Milanov, Kurt Baum and Leonard Warren), was a demonstration of the primary operatic life-force. Under Maestro Cleva, and assisted by Jean Madeira's svelte Azucena, these artists conveyed the only kind of *vraisemblance* we care about in grand opera, the musical. Mr. Baum's voice, for example, is tense and rather graceless but it is big, reliable and intelligently used. The appearance of the younger and more personable Gino Penno in the tenor role was vastly less successful: Penno was more unbelievable for his vocal deficiencies than Baum for visual.

Lily Pons, whose charm on stage remains formidable, has only the ghost of a voice. The demonstrations that greeted her performances this year were a personal rather than a musical tribute. Marian Anderson's fine Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera* revealed a decline in volume only, but Miss Pons seems almost to have lost her voice.

The announcement that Maria Callas will open the next season in Bellini's *Norma* suggests (despite the sobering prospect of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*) that the Italian repertory will retain its honor at the Metropolitan. Callas' numerous voices, which sound almost equally lovely on the records, have made her more famous than Tebaldi or Milanov in this country. Indeed the lover of live opera, with its triumphs and disasters, must concede at least this to recordings: the *risorgimento* of the nineteenth century Italian opera, particularly of the less familiar works of the unacknowledged giants Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini and the young Verdi, has come about largely through fine Italian recordings. One always looks forward, however, to the perils of live encounter. The 1956-7 repertory will also restore *Ernani, Don Carlo* and *La Gioconda*, for a total of thirteen Italian bills, acknowledging by a majority the natural predominance of this branch of opera with which the company has been so long and famously identified.

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JOHN LOGAN

John Gruen's Settings for Wallace Stevens[1]

How many ways of looking at a blackbird are there? Thirteen archetypal ways: innumerable other ways that make up the silence of numbers after thirteen. Consider that among all the possible silences, the settings for the remaining Ways after thirteen are bounded by a parallel silence, as sure as the silence of the remaining Ways themselves. We know that whatever Way lies hidden and implied in Stevens' poem, there exists a hidden and implied setting in Gruen's music. The one is a function of the other, in the mathematical sense. I mean that the inevitability of Gruen's settings is the inevitability of the number for the point.

And sometimes, if we are not careful, we confuse the set of numbers with the set of points; we find ourselves from time to time thinking of the music as the poem and of the poem as the music. This is natural enough when we realize, say, that the blackbird's eye *moves* in Stevens' first Way and also moves in Gruen's music. Indeed in this particular case one wonders briefly if the blackbird does not learn more from the composer about how to move his eye here, and then again here, than he learns from the poet. For Stevens assumes the movement and shows it abstractly among the mountains:

> *Among twenty snowy mountains,*
> *The only moving thing*
> *Was the eye of the blackbird.*

The eye of the blackbird changes over the surfaces of the snowed peaks as the figures in Ramuz' novel do. But the movement is not abstract in the music: in the first three bars the blackbird's eye shifts, again shifts, and blinks twice.

But in the second Way it is the poem which is concrete and the music which is abstract! So you will see what I mean by the listener's occasionally having to be excused for confusing poem and setting. For here the attenuated spirituality of the trio of minds is in the sparse music, confined largely to a pair of notes in unison (that scarcely even change interval), while the discreteness of the minds, their materiality, is shockingly concrete in the poem's image of three blackbirds in a tree:

> *I was of three minds,*
> *Like a tree*
> *In which there are three blackbirds.*

[1] Song Cycle, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," by John Gruen. Recorded on *Contemporary Records.* Patricia Neway, soprano, accompanied by the composer.

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Yet the setting is right not only as a balance to the poetry but as an interpretation: for the point is not that the blackbirds are distinct from the tree, or, finally, that they are even distinct from each other, but that they are like "I" who "was of three minds"—and mind is attenuated, spiritual, sparse—thus we are back to the music again. You see what I mean about the overlappings of poem and music? Who is to say whether the music interprets the poem or the poem interprets the music here? The answer is neither, except as two lovers may be thought of, one as an interpretation of the other.

In the third Way the whirling of the bird "in the autumn winds" is unmistakable in the music, and the immense suggestiveness of Stevens' "pantomime" ("It was a small part of the pantomime") is spelled out excruciatingly in the final bars of the music. Is the wind a mime of the bird or the bird a mime of the wind or both a pantomime of the autumn or the autumn a pantomime of bird and wind?

The eerie wonder of the union of man and woman, in the fourth Way, is hauntingly brought to us by another spare setting, whose tone takes us back to the intellectuality of the setting for the second Way. The music prepares us well for what would be otherwise a great shock: the awareness that the blackbird belongs in this union, as he belongs in every common or miraculous place (it is this realization which gives us the full range of "Ways of looking at a blackbird"). The voice line catches the union of the three in a disarmingly simple way, by never moving over an interval of more than a halfstep and throughout reaching no more than a step and a half on either side of the first note, the highest note coming with the pronunciation of "blackbird."

A man and a woman
Are one.
A man and a woman and a blackbird
Are one.

If we do not know how to make the fifth Way, i.e., how to take the fifth point of view, which requires the immense subtlety of distinction between "inflection" and "innuendo," we learn from the music, which illustrates both, and musically ties the whistling of the blackbird to "inflection" and the active silence-of-the-blackbird (after whistling) to "innuendo."

The barbaric stains icicles cast on window glass for the sixth Way are painted for us in the percussive piano setting, and the points of ice become points of tone and they dance the one with the other, or perhaps the one *as* the other, in a primitive jerk-step. The blackbird is here too. Or rather as we come more and more to see, he is behind this dance as he is behind every event (a more accurate way of saying, as I did above, that he is in every place). Again the piano registers the shock of our growing knowledge of the bird. For after all, supposing we looked at him in every way we would know all there is to know

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of him. And when we have looked at him in thirteen ways (we aren't quite half through them) will he not already be sufficiently known to be in our power. Or we in his. (We are already almost half way through the Ways!) It is too late for us now, if the blackbird is terrible. For we must go on.

In the seventh Way the drawn character of "The thin men of Haddam" is caught through the slender unadorned line with which the piano enters, to set these words. The thinness is heightened by the piercing immateriality, not of the gold, but of the *shine* of the imagined golden birds. Is this austere? But we have not reckoned yet with the dreadful slenderness of the blackbird's legs as they walk about the delicate feet of the women! As this attenuation outdoes the golden birds within the thin imagination of the thin men, so too the walking movement in the piano, a delicate descending figure, already intrudes in the very setting of the words "you imagine golden birds" and recurs throughout the piece. The thin men are returned to their opening theme in the closing bars, but this apparent generosity is a mask: the music line is no longer so unadorned. The men are not so thin after all; the most austere blackbird is, of course, victor. Therefore, why indeed should the "thin men of Haddam . . . imagine golden birds"? Their foolishness has made them fat.

The "noble accents and lucid inescapable rhythms" of the eighth Way are almost too easy for the composer to set, but before we suppose some kind of ease we must, again, remember the bird. Do we "know noble accents"? Do we know "lucid, inescapable rhythms"? Yes, but the bird is here: he is "*involved.*" How? Because he is himself an accent (his eye?) and a rhythm (his body line?), or because he is that by which we know these things? Who is to say? It is enough to realize that he is involved. The shock of this realization is the most inescapable rhythm of all; and the piano begins and ends with it.

In the ninth Way the blackbird flies and draws and marks the expanding circles of our sight, but is not himself contained within any of them. He evokes each greater circle in turn, with the help of the piano, and then as the circles widen, he himself begins to vanish; he is lost first to the piano, and a little later to the voice too. But the circles are here, so he must himself be here—but *in another way*! Perhaps the tenth?

In the tenth Way the blackbirds are seen "flying in a green light." Their wings undulate gorgeously, or terribly, in the piano setting. And even the pimps for the muse find their senses waked as if by a glissando, and they "cry out sharply" at the color, or at the music, or at the poem, or at the blackbirds.

In the eleventh Way we ride out in a coach over the rapid wheels or trots of the piano. Suddenly a fear pierces us as the voice rises a shocking halfstep over the unchanged tone of the piano. The blackbird! Wait, it must have been the shadow of the coach, for it was a

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massive shade. Then, as the voice repeats the word "blackbirds" three more times, we realize to our horror that we ride "in a *glass* coach" It casts no shadow! The musical setting has trapped us among the blackbirds, whom it has itself multiplied, and the hugeness of "the shadow" is accounted for in a frightful (eleventh) way!

At last the power of the blackbird is unforgettably and awfully clear and we are quite prepared for the simple affirmation of the twelfth Way, which makes it unnecessary for us to see the blackbird at all, or even his shadow, real or imagined, in order to know his immense strength. "The river is moving" and from this we are sure that "the blackbird must be flying"! The implication is as certain as is the existence of the piano, which, however, is silent here in order (generously) to understate the most lucid and most profoundly disturbing revelation which the voice gives. There is furthermore an almost liturgical cast given to this Way through the use of the unaided voice, and that is proper at this point. For when will the presence, or the power, of the blackbird cease?

The thirteenth Way is marked by the composer "largo," and it proceeds in the chords of a kind of oblique hymn. The liturgical suggestion of the twelfth Way is carried out more formally in this final thirteenth Way; it is a kind of solemn celebration for the blackbird, who is, for the moment (an ominous realization), established, or throned officially in the cedar limbs. It has been "evening all afternoon" (his doing). "It was snowing/ And it was going to snow" (his doing; his eye is cold). What next show of his power, we wonder uneasily. The piano refuses to finish its line, but it is suspended: the written music is done. The poet and the composer leave the rest, platonically, to our own effort. Nor did we ever suppose before that we were subject to the superstition of thirteen! But the responsibility, the need even, is clear. The next Way is the fourteenth—.

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WILLIAM BECKER

Some French Plays in Translation

THERE ARE FEW technical problems in the theatre so perplexing and so inevitably without governing principles as the whole complex business of translating foreign plays. Translations come into being as results of a myriad of individual motivations; they are moulded by all sorts of circumstances, some relevant, some not; their authors' aims are defined by a dozen different viewpoints as to what translations should try to do. There are workers who will insist on trying to reveal the original author with as much literal accuracy as possible. There are sophisticates who, invoking the ultimate impossibility of total translation, will claim to concentrate on the words, or the spirit, or the ideas, or some hopeful combination of all three; and who can, with perfect equanimity, defend the wildest departures and most violent distortions as representing some essential accuracy. There are others to whom accuracy as such is beside the point, who think of themselves as adapting not so much *from* a given text as *for* a given production—with a particular director and designer and actors, whose special bents and abilities supply the primary obligations. There are people who would like to write a play themselves, but cannot think of a plot. We get translators, and adapters, and version-makers, and suppliers of trots. We get people who are first-rate authors in their own right; and we get non-entities with literary longings from publishing houses and universities. We get connoisseurs and vulgarians, slavish beetle-brows and extravagant egotists; and we get a lot of just plain craftsmen doing their competent best to make a neglected repertoire available. But, in the end, we get precious few good translations from anybody.

As a practical matter, the art of translation for the theatre is analogous to the art of directing, and involves many similar problems. Both are, in the last analysis, interpretative or critical functions. In a brilliant essay, which ought to be required reading for anybody who has to do with plays, Stark Young once outlined the essential responsibilities of interpretation in terms of "Seeing the Point." He observed that "most men are blind to the fact of their ignorance of the essential character of each individual thing. They do not see in each thing that which distinguishes it from every other; they do not see what, if the thing were freed from all but its own characteristic, would remain, and would be the point of it, and would define its existence in the midst of a multitude of things like and unlike. What men are least apt to do is

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to see the point." The accuracy of this observation, for the general run of translators, is devastating.

Yet seeing the point, and reproducing it, is no simple matter; for, as Young himself is at pains to point out, the "essential quality" of a play makes itself felt not only in broad, but through many minor details of language and construction. It is there not only in the general rhythm and flow of a whole play, but in the special beats of individual scenes. It is there not only in the central idea of a play, but in the subsidiary and peripheral expressions of it, which are multitudinous, and each one a deliberate creative choice in its own right. The ideal translation would obviously be that which expressed this "essential quality" with perfect unanimity and thoroughness, and in this lies the fundamental case for purity and faithfulness as the aims of true translation. And it is a strong case: for these aims have considerable practical advantages. They provide both a positive discipline and a negative limitation on license.

There is, of course, another approach to the whole problem, which lies at the opposite extreme from true translation, and has its own legitimacy. This is true adaptation, which is produced, and must be judged, by different standards altogether. When Clyde Fitch set his hand to a farce by Feydeau, or W. S. Gilbert adapted Labiche, the results were entirely new creations, in which the qualities of the original author were not translated, but transformed, and ultimately submerged in the strong artistic individuality of the adapter. They became, in fact, works in their own right, deriving certainly from some one or more qualities of the original, but making no attempt to achieve a like unity. The same may be said of the Restoration versions of Molière. There are a good many such instances in the history of dramatic literature—more, unfortunately, than have been preserved—and all of them have a special value. But they are not, in the broadest sense, the answer to the problem of translation as such.

Between true translation and true adaptation, there falls the most of what passes on Broadway for American versions of foreign plays. And it is in this murky area, where there are no real disciplines, that most translators go wrong. It is the province of people who aim for faithfulness, but miss the point, and of people who would like to adapt, but lack a sufficiently potent artistic individuality of their own. It is also the province of people with no particular aims or principles, who give way to random temptations, and acquiesce in the general Broadway consensus that foreign plays have to be adapted *somewhat*. These are the translators who will, at best, seem to represent an author for a single generation, and at worst can bury him altogether. Every major dramatic writer of the modern period has been deliberately or inadvertently victimized by such translations: among them are such standard items as Archer's Ibsen, Livingston's Pirandello, Valency's Giraudoux, the authorized versions of Lorca, and all of the translations of

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Tchekov except those by Stark Young. And due to the shortsightedness of publishers and agents as to where their vested interests truly lie, many ineffectual translations become entrenched weeds that no one can readily supplant.

Yet it is worth enquiring why commercial elements in general, and Broadway in particular, condone and encourage the somewhat adapted translation. Why is the temptation to adapt and reform, to cut and expand, to rearrange and rewrite, so apparently great? Partly it is that these things frequently represent an easy way out. Partly it is that they are the standard processes of an original playwright, and have been formalized for Broadway in the feverish activities of the usual pre-Broadway try-out tour. But beyond that, there are reasons of a more compelling legitimacy, which good translators will necessarily weigh, and bad ones almost certainly exploit. Much poor translation is impelled by the real or fancied incompetence of actors and directors. There are always those who will claim that a director cannot get such a point across, or that actors will not be able to play such a scene or speak such a line; and there are always Valencys to pander to simple-mindedness and the vulgarism that comes most easily. But even given the best will in the world, the problems in tailoring a translation to the given conditions of the theatre are staggering.

If the instruments of the theatre were perfectly gifted and boundlessly capable, translation would present few real problems. But most of the instruments with which one works in the theatre—the language, the actors, the insight of the director—are too human in character to be anything but highly imperfect. Nor are the predispositions, the knowledge, and the conditioning of a given audience any the less urgently limiting. The consequences of these limits will frequently present the translator with an impasse which he can only break by adapting; and there are strictly formal problems as well as substantial ones. Consider, for example, the question of time in relation to language, which is a chief element in a play's rhythm. An accurate literal translation from the French can require almost half again as much time to speak as the French original. The English language, as spoken, has a slower pace; and in the theatre, where French actors and their audiences have accustomed themselves to an exaggerated speed, it has a *much* slower one. Leaving aside the French audience's much greater delight in speech as such, which presents its own problems, the crucial matter of timing will simply be different for American actors, and will work an alteration in the general effect whether the play is cut or not. On the substantial side, one commonly faces, apart from the usual topical unfamiliarities, vast differences in the social backgrounds against which dramatic material is always vitally posed. When Pirandello, in *Right You Are,* depicts man's inhumanity to man against a very special social order involving a rigid and peculiarly European bureaucracy, how is one to cope with the aura of strangeness, and hence

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the dilution of impact, that will be produced for an American audience?

One could extend a list of such considerations almost indefinitely. They constitute the legitimate imponderables which make fine translation an extraordinarily subtle art, and which show up the gratuitous distortions and vulgarities of the Livingston-Valency school as the most inexcusable waste. The unfortunate thing is that these delicate imponderables are what are used to justify the prevailing Broadway penchant for adapting somewhat, with the ironic result that true translation is not merely infrequently achieved, but seldom attempted at all. Moreover, so far as the capacities of American actors are concerned, the failures of translation simply tend to perpetuate and aggravate the existing limitations. Much of the provincialism, technically speaking, of American actors comes of their not having been exposed to European methods, or required through practical exercise in foreign styles to assimilate them. A strong case could be made for the position that adapting to suit the fancied limitations of actors is an insult and a serious disservice to the acting profession.

These observations were provoked partly by the resurgence of interest on Broadway in French plays in general, and partly by four new translations from the French, two of which have been recent hits on Broadway. What makes these new translations of particular significance is that all of them are by writers of established importance—Christopher Fry, Lillian Hellman, and Richard Wilbur—and two of them are arrestingly different versions of the same play.

I

Giraudoux' *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu* was first performed in Paris in 1935. Various translations of the play have made the rounds of Broadway productions offices ever since, without stirring much enthusiasm. Christopher Fry's version, called *Tiger at the Gates*, was specially commissioned by Robert Joseph for the new production, which opened last summer in London to brilliant notices and was shortly thereafter transferred, under the aegis of the Playwrights' Company, to Broadway, where it became the prestige hit of the season.[1] Twenty years from the Théâtre de l'Athénée to the Helen Hayes—a transition which gives point to Eric Bentley's remark of a few years ago that the "creative force of 'modern theatre' has not been absorbed; it has been passed over."

In Christopher Fry, Giraudoux has finally found a translator who sees the point, and is content to make it, on Giraudoux' own terms, and as nearly as possible in Giraudoux' own words. Giraudoux' talent as a dramatist was a highly specialized one, too inordinately dependent on sheer language to allow him greatness, yet consistent and powerful

[1] Published by the Oxford University Press. $2.75.

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enough to give him major stature. In its weakest moments, Giraudoux' dramaturgy bears the same relation to great playwriting as fine elocution does to great acting: and this is, of course, why he found Louis Jouvet an inspiration. The stiff clumsy elements in Giraudoux' construction of plays found their counterpart in Jouvet's awkward inflexible body. Yet Jouvet's extraordinary range and his command of all the subtle possibilities of speech—the beauty and the nuances of his voice, even in declamation—were irresistibly compelling. He could make theatre out of sheer speaking just as Giraudoux could turn language into its own drama. The rhythm of a Giraudoux play is seldom expressed in the general build and flow of an action, or in a dialectic of ideas, or a careful march of events. It is expressed in the movement of the language, the verbal parallelisms and echos, the point and counterpoint of his highly concentrated wit. The qualities of the scenes are established not so much by the action as by the style, by the form the dialogue takes. The pace and the weight are there in the speech, be it light rapid-fire conversation, with witty turns of phrase and verbal tricks, or longer meditations that have a slower internal linguistic dramatism.

Fry's *Tiger at the Gates* is the first translation of any Giraudoux play to grasp this movement and convey it effectively. Maurice Valency always made it a point to chop up the longer speeches and substitute cheap quips for Giraudoux' dry verbal ironies. Fry has left Giraudoux intact; and translated speech for speech, with no interpolations and no cuts. His version therefore works in the theatre as Giraudoux meant it to work—not better, not worse, not differently—which is, after all, the sum of what good translations are supposed to do. Here is a simple, but very typical, Giraudoux exchange, which I have selected more or less at random:

HECTOR. Comment l'as tu enlevée? Consentement ou contrainte?

PARIS. Voyons, Hector! Tu connais les femmes aussi bien que moi. Elles ne consentent qu'à la contrainte. Mais alors avec enthousiasme.

HECTOR. A cheval? Et laissant sous ses fenêtres cet amas de crottin qui est la trace des séducteurs?

PARIS. C'est une enquête?

HECTOR. C'est une enquête. Tâche pour une fois de répondre avec précision. Tu n'as pas insul-

HECTOR. How did you fetch her away? Willingly, or did you compel her?

PARIS. Listen, Hector! You know women as well as I do. They are only willing when you compel them, but after that they're as enthusiastic as you are.

HECTOR. On horseback, in the usual style of seducers, leaving a heap of horse manure under the windows.

PARIS. Is this a court of enquiry?

HECTOR. Yes, it is. Try for once to answer precisely and accurately. Have you insulted her hus-

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té la maison conjugale, ni la terre grecque?	band's house, or the Greek earth?
PARIS. L'eau grecque, un peu. Elle se baignait . . .	PARIS. The Greek water, a little. She was bathing.

This little passage illustrates very well the aspect of Giraudoux' style which cannot be absolutely conveyed in English: its compression and economy, which are peculiar even for French. But it also illustrates the aspect, which is perhaps more crucial, and which Fry has succeeded in conveying: the careful balance of phrase against phrase and speech against speech, which gives even the most conversational passages a slightly formalized classical character.

What Christopher Fry realized in the translation, Harold Clurman, on the whole, ably carried out in the production. Directing Giraudoux properly takes a kind of courage that few modern directors have: the courage to let actors stand and talk. The directoral task is to assure that they talk well and theatrically, animate the language, make it work. This, of course, demands brilliant performers, and such, with one exception, Clurman had for all the major roles. Both Michael Redgrave as Hector and Barbara Jefford as Andromache brought the kind of strong individual personality to their roles that makes for a big performance, and can give real theatrical vitality to Giraudoux' more intractable passages of eloquence. There are several such passages: one between Helen and Andromache, Hector's oration to the dead, and an important scene between Hector and Ulysses toward the end of the play. Yet this last—which contains the heart of the play's more serious observations on war and peace, and which brings to a climax Hector's efforts on behalf of peace (the ending of the play with its ironic reversal being a deliberate anti-climax)—tended, I thought, to give way to tedium. It is a ponderous scene, full of poetic metaphor, and composed entirely of long, rather set, speeches which Walter Fitzgerald as Ulysses delivered handsomely, but without the vigor or the subtle dexterity of pace they required; with the result that not even Redgrave's fine personal intensity could quite sustain the scene. For me, however, the most perfect performance was not Redgrave's, good as it was, but Leueen MacGrath's as Cassandra. Miss MacGrath has exactly the feeling for nuance that Giraudoux requires. Her one word announcement of Helen's impending entrance—a simple "Helen!", with a simple flippant gesture and a wry curl of the lip—had in it enough ironic richness to establish the tone for a whole act. Very good also was Diane Cilento's Helen who, as portrayed by Giraudoux, and somewhat sharpened by Clurman, was not the dignified demigoddess of Homeric myth, but a coquettish nymph, all sex and coy innocence, the sort of blonde that Trojan gentlemen prefer.

If there were faults in Clurman's work, they seemed to me to rest in his slightly off-key handling of the minor characters. In sketching

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his point that wars are fought for all the most absurd and trivial reasons, Giraudoux posed against his moving portrait of Hector a gallery of frivolous caricatures. It is the lecherous old men, the fatuous jingoistic poet, the preposterous academicians, who in their outlandish oppositions to Hector's plan to return Helen to the Greeks become the agents of Destiny, which is in turn the tiger at the gates of war. Giraudoux' strokes were so broad in the creation of these minor type-figures that some considerable measure of subtlety is demanded in performance, if they are to preserve enough semblance of reality to make them biting and humourous, and not merely raucous and farcical. But subtle forms of caricature are among the more urgently missing features of American theatrical method, and Clurman's otherwise acute sense of satirical balance seemed to me, in these instances, to err on the side of vulgarity—which is to say, on the side of raucousness and farce. The result was a slight inconsistency of a peculiarly American kind in the over-all tone. The idea of the "type" is so repugnant to our current schools of acting and to the directoral concepts which have formed them that caricature inevitably gets relegated to a low order of performance, and seldom turns up in serious American plays at all. This is, in fact, another serious obstruction to a full understanding in this country of what French theatrical style is all about. For subtlety in caricature is a gift on which many of the best French actors, deriving their craft from a thorough training in Molière, have built their reputations.

But the larger virtues of *Tiger at the Gates* were so substantial and so authentically in the manner of Giraudoux that these minor flaws of miscasting and misdirection could easily be overlooked. This production, and this translation, remain the best Giraudoux I have seen, even in France; and may at last convince American producers that the poisonous little talents of adapters like Maurice Valency may be repudiated without consequent disaster at the box-office.

II

Jean Anouilh has had poor success in America. Prior to the current season, seven of his plays had failed consecutively on Broadway, although a recent off-Broadway production of *Thieves' Carnival* had excellent notices. The crowning irony of this history is that Anouilh has now had his first real success with one of his inferior plays in a version that pays relatively little attention to his original text. *L'Alouette* was well received in its original Paris production in 1953 and ultimately ran for two seasons at the Théâtre Montparnasse Gaston Baty. As *The Lark*, it opened in London in May 1955, in a version by Christopher Fry, got bad notices, and closed very quickly. For the New York production, Lillian Hellman was commissioned to make a new adaptation; and it is this version, starring Julie Harris, which has been a

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hit at the Longacre Theatre. Both the Hellman and the Fry versions are in print.[2]

L'Alouette was not a very good play to begin with. In the first place, for a play about so potentially rich a character as St. Joan, it is phenomenally thin; and for an English-speaking audience, after Bernard Shaw, what forgiveness? Anouilh's Joan is, in fact, no more than another in his long series of largely identical portraits of innocent young girls—representing strong impulsive life and a pure humanity—in a world of falseness, corruption, jaded sophistication, and formalized inhuman values. This is the perennial theme of his romantic comedies—*Colombe, Léocadia, La Répétition, L'Invitation au Château*—and it is simply insufficient to support the Joan story.

But even apart from its thinness, which is characteristic of many other Anouilh plays, *L'Alouette* is poor in respects which are unusual for Anouilh. In his best work, Anouilh exhibits gifts which are entirely *du théâtre*: for brilliantly theatricalized portraiture, and for incisively constructed scenes in which there is little waste motion and a fine sense of theatrical rhythm. However trivial or light, Anouilh's best plays have a charming and altogether distinctive way of *working* in the theatre. *L'Alouette*, on the other hand, is overlong and poorly constructed; its scenes are unbalanced and its dialogue frequently verbose; and, with one or two exceptions, the characters around Joan are surprisingly uninteresting—and only mildly theatrical. The general form, moreover, is unwieldy. The underlying convention is that the personages of Joan's trial have gathered for another representation of her story. (Anouilh has them setting aside some props left over from the previous performance on their first entrance; Hellman discards this device altogether, and starts the play with some religious music, so that the convention never gets explained.) The ensuing drama is composed of a series of flashbacks—scenes between Joan and her family, Baudricourt, the Dauphin, and so on to the trial—with the prosecutors of the trial onstage throughout, and the action a foregone conclusion. This technique has the effect of detaching the audience emotionally—since there is no general sweep of action to catch it up—and, for me at least, of leaving the mind free to feed on a more intellectual fare that in fact was never served. Such techniques, as Brecht for one has demonstrated, are splendid for didactic playwrights; but they seem to me very inappropriate to Anouilh.

Christopher Fry's version of *The Lark* is an accurate reproduction of Anouilh's own text, slightly anglicized in occasional phrases, but a true translation. It has the virtue of accomplishing in English exactly what Anouilh composed in French; and the consequent fault of being a poor, talky, and rather boring play. Miss Hellman, on the other hand, while adhering to the general outlines of Anouilh's script, has adapted

[2] THE LARK, translated by *Christopher Fry*. Oxford University Press. $2.75. THE LARK, adapted by *Lillian Hellman*. Random House. $2.95.

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fairly drastically. On first comparing it with the French, her version reads like a sketch or an early draft: I would guess that there are perhaps half as many words in her text as in Fry's. She has rearranged scenes, and eliminated great chunks of the dialogue, reducing all the speech to a sort of functional bluntness, which is rather artless and without distinction as speech, but which, though it reads poorly, acts quite well. In so doing, she has, of course, destroyed much of Anouilh's essential quality, for although his gift is not fundamentally a verbal one, like Giraudoux', Anouilh does write literately and well, with a typically French feeling for precision, wit and decorativeness. Miss Hellman's text has practically no literary values and its rhythms are entirely her own. The result is that the play moves with a very straightforward American "speed," which is in some respects an improvement. Nor has she quite violated Anouilh's viewpoint; she has, as it were, simply cancelled it out. A theme that was thin to begin with has evaporated altogether, leaving Miss Hellman's script with no intellectual substance at all. There are tag-ends of Anouilh's secular cynicism, nullified by conventional echoes of an idealistic-religious Joan; and the end of the play has been altered in such a way as to provide a kind of apotheosis that is religious in form but empty of any meaning in the context of the rest of the play. One got the impression that Miss Hellman's objective was not so much to produce a translation of Anouilh as to manufacture a vehicle for a given production; and one could almost sense the frenetic patching and pruning that must have gone on during the pre-Broadway try-out tour. Yet the vehicle and the performance did finally come out all of a piece; for Miss Hellman, while she may not be a remarkable literary figure, is a remarkable theatrical craftsman. Her skeletal, fast-moving text was entirely appropriate to the special gifts of Joseph Anthony, the director, whose visual, choreographic, intuitive approach to the problem of directing lends itself most of all to unliterate, non-intellectual work, where there are simply effects to be achieved, not points to be made. Thus, while the evening as a whole left one relatively untouched, there were unquestionable compensations of a theatrical sort.

There was, first of all, Julie Harris as Joan. Miss Harris is not a versatile actress. She has no command of gesture, and no very interesting control or range in her voice. She is awkward and frequently monotonous. What she does have is an expressive face, enormous energy, great intensity of concentration—and genius. She shamelessly exploits the same tricks in role after role: a certain breathless quality, an off-beat vocal timbre, an odd and entirely self-created accent. But she is always absorbing to watch—not necessarily interesting, but absorbing—and that, after all, is the quintessential imponderable which separates stars from other good actresses. Her quality is specifically her own, and her technical faults get subsumed in the sheer consistency of the personality she projects. Even her one all-purpose gesture or

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pose, the suddenly outstretched arms and tossed-back head, somehow manages to serve the awful variety of uses to which she puts it. Moreover, for all her apparent artifices, there is real humanity in her performances, and considerable study behind her effects. She has a gift which is traditionally unusual among star actresses, for playing *to*, and not merely against, other performers; and for Anouilh, who builds his plays in the classical French manner out of finished *scenes* usually dominated by only two characters, this is an essential gift. Miss Harris is, in fact, *the* American Anouilh actress. One can quite happily imagine her playing her way through his entire succession of undernourished shopgirls, with their common-sense romanticism and the energies of uncorrupted life flowing through them. They would all turn out to be Julie Harris; and for them, as for this Joan, that would be more than good fortune, it would be a destiny fulfilled.

The rest of the cast, with two exceptions, was an uncommonly astute assemblage of talents. There were three outstandingly brilliant performances—Christopher Plummer's as Warwick, Theodore Bikel's as Baudricourt, and Paul Roebling's as the Dauphin. Joan's long scene with Baudricourt was for me not only the best thing in the play (it was the least adapted), but as perfect a vignette as Broadway offered all season—it was a really exemplary piece of scene study. As Warwick, Christopher Plummer carried the burden of what remained of Anouilh's cynicism in an effortless handsome performance of a kind that is coming to seem customary with him. One of the disappointments was Joseph Wiseman as the Inquisitor, the one role in Anouilh's play that gave some promise of intellectual interest, and the one that Miss Hellman most thoroughly emasculated. Wiseman is also an actor of considerable parts, but one who, apparently, has lately permitted himself to be type-cast into sterility. The other poor showing was Boris Karloff's in the rather thankless role of Cauchon; he was, the way Raymond Massey always is, amiable, artless, and boring.

III

The position of Molière in the French theatre finds no real analogy in English dramatic history—least of all in Shakespeare. There is a tradition, both in dramatic writing and in performance, which extends in an unbroken line from Molière to Giraudoux and Anouilh. It is, moreover, the perpetual rediscovery of Molière that keeps the French theatre so continuously alive. Molière's influence on later French dramaturgy has been altogether good—Shakespeare's on English playwriting almost altogether bad. So it is that the essence of the schism that separates the French theatre from ours may be found in the almost total unavailability of Molière. If we could once grasp him, absorb his work into our "idea of a theatre," learn to perform him and enjoy him, the rest of the French tradition would fall very quickly into place.

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Not the only barrier, but a chief one, to any such absorption is of course the problem of translation. There are, oddly enough, some remarkably fine *adaptations* of Molière into English, notably the Restoration and early Eighteenth Century versions by Dryden, Vanbrugh, Wycherly, and Fielding, and the versions into peasant Irish dialect by Lady Gregory in *The Kiltartan Molière*. But the success of all of these lies precisely in their having very ably imposed alien values on Molière's plots, themes, and language. They came into being with the pressures of a strong and lively theatrical milieu on them, and their function was to take a place within that milieu and to reflect its individual character. But aside from these rather special items, the attempts to put Molière adequately into English on his own terms present a dismal sequence of hack work. Today, in fact, we get few attempts at all; and those we do get, if they are not school trots, tend to be illiterate romps like Miles Malleson's version of *The Miser* for the Old Vic, or rhetorical pomposities like Lord Longford's versions into alexandrine couplets for the Dublin Gate.

Now, out of the blue, there suddenly appears what is surely the best translation of Molière ever done into English. It is Richard Wilbur's *The Misanthrope*.[3] The American stage does not deserve it, and probably won't know what to do with it; but it is a volume that no reader interested in poetry or the theatre should miss. I predict that it will take a place among the substantial classics of English translation.

Having said so much, it would be foolish to try to describe this work's incredible virtues. Suffice it to say that, both in form and substance, it is a true translation, line by line into rhymed English couplets, capturing with astonishing success the intricate subtleties of tone and manner, the delicate alternations between parody, satire, farce, and high comedy, that make *The Misanthrope* not merely a great play, but a great poem. More to the point, perhaps, for the purposes of this article, are the inevitable differences in effect which have to do with the character of the two languages, and which will prove the most troublesome fact in any performance of the play. It is no accident, for example, that rhymed verse has never had any substantial place in English as a dramatic language. In the first place, English, unlike French, is not an easily rhymed language. And secondly, English is a heavily accented language, which French is not. The result is that English rhymes, falling as they must on accented syllables, call attention to themselves in a way that French rhymes seldom do. In fact, rhymed verse in French, as spoken by practised Comédie actors, becomes largely subliminal in its effect on an audience. Thus, although Wilbur has, to the utmost degree possible, made it feasible to run his lines on, he has not altogether been able to avoid making the language do rather more than it does in French. Expressions that are merely

[3] Harcourt, Brace. $5.00. Edition limited to 1500 copies.

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witty in the original tend to become epigrammatic in his translation This is not to say that such effects, in Wilbur's skilful handling c them, are inappropriate, but only that they are different, and that the impose special problems on actors. For the rhymes, if allowed to a sume the exaggerated importance that is their tendency, will crowd ou the more subtle linguistic effects that are the real delights of the trans lation. Yet, if the heroic couplet is a more brittle medium than th French alexandrine, Wilbur's work demonstrates that it is more cor rect than any other form would be.

Nor are the difficulties for actors insurmountable. A production o this translation, by the Poets' Theatre in Cambridge, which prove very little else, proved that. Wilbur's version is stageworthy—and ever durable. For if the production was amateurish in its acting and direc tion—replete with fops in the fairy manner—the verse itself came through extraordinarily well; and for that, some credit is unquestion ably due to the literate young people who spoke it. The palpable secret of such success as they had was in avoiding the temptation that would obsess many actors to slur over the rhymes, or throw them away, and in concentrating instead on the strong internal wit and logic of the speeches as a whole. For it is precisely this strength that Wilbur has achieved so magnificently, thereby enabling a linguistic *tour de force* to be a workable theatre piece as well.

IV

Translation is an impossible, and frequently thankless, task. Yet it remains one of the most challenging of literary jobs, and, perhaps especially in the theatre, one of the most useful. It is also a discipline *par excellence* for anyone who wants to find out in the most intimate way what good playwriting is all about. There is a huge European repertoire which is altogether untranslated, and a substantial one which needs to be rescued from existing translations. Some of this is grist for projects in the studios and universities; some of it will only yield to exceptional talents like Richard Wilbur and Christopher Fry. But all of it is waiting; and the very least one can say is that until there is more and better activity in translation by more and better writers, a great many theatrical riches are going begging by default.

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VILLIAM ARROWSMITH

Nine New Poets[1]

HERE ARE NINE new poets, several of particular promise. They make no sermon at all, and I make one at their peril. Take them as they ome.

Mr. Wilfred Watson's first volume of verse, *Friday's Child*, is a strikngly uneven performance, promising in parts but the promise everyvhere blunted and even denied by a pompous, incantatory rhetorical iabit, as though these poems got chanted into shape by ear alone, and :he mind and sense were starved for the ear. The rhetoric derives from the same uneasy stance that makes his verse at first blush attractive, an easy-going air of bouncy innocence, life-obsessed and guileless, a kind of good-natured *furor loquendi* without, I think, much substance as spoken. At least I find it hard to see any particular preconceptions here, and most of the poems seem at best *ad hoc*, defined more by amiable attitudes to any subject than by real concerns or subjects or tensions. His stance makes him lean heavily and admittedly on Dylan Thomas, even compulsively, not merely for the sake of Thomas' rhetoric but for the habits that rhetoric serves: the knockemdown shock, the vital rudeness, the rubadub bawdy and the big paean for the created world. Which is good, if your skills happen to lie with the big drums. But typically Mr. Watson works best in the smaller manner or where traditional forms force him to work by more than ear ("To the Shadbolts," "Emily Carr," "Letter to Dorothy Bazett"); where he romps boy-like after the big firecrackers or the poignant bawdy or the imperative O's ("Death now shall pinch her bottom," "O fell the fall/ of Adam . . . ," "O chimney-pot my mother"), his appetite for strong sound undoes his sense almost completely or undercuts it to the vanishing-point. His worst poems are precisely those in which the ballad-form, loosely construed as a device for releasing *lacrimae rerum* by juxtaposing bouncy language and traditional sentiment, invites his ear to stand aloof; and one poem, "The White Bird," in which a white bird, enormously but vaguely symbolic, is treated to death in the manner of Cock Robin, shows how perilously close to self-decep-

[1] FRIDAY'S CHILD, by *Wilfred Watson*. Farrar, Straus & Cudahy. $2.75. POETS OF TODAY II (containing THE HATCH, by *Norma Farber*; THE IRONY OF JOY, by *Robert Pack*; GOOD NEWS OF DEATH AND OTHER POEMS, by *Louis Simpson*). Scribner's. $3.50. BIRTHDAYS FROM THE OCEAN, by *Isabella Gardner*. Houghton Mifflin. $3.00. SOME TREES by *John Ashbery*. Yale Univ. Press. $2.50. EXILES AND MARRIAGES, by *Donald Hall*. Viking Press. $3.00. THE MORAL CIRCUS, by *Edwin Honig*. Contemporary Poetry. $3.00. THE DEATHS AT PARAGON, INDIANA, by *John Woods*. Indiana Univ. Press. $2.75.

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tion his rhetorical habits can bring him. But it is in the ballad-poem —about half the volume—that self-deception is most clear: in th unearned, though catchy, refrains, in the absence of subject or stor and the pretentious symbolism, in the failure to capitalize upo charged language by relief of direct language, in mawkishness only little disguised by bawdiness or rudeness. Throughout the book, tha is, I sense the presence of the assumption that brave language or ebu lience of syntax is really the whole game; and this is unfortunate, fo Mr. Watson, apart from his moments of Pogo-poetry, has a reasonabl clever ear and everywhere manages to make good lines which he cai never quite sustain into a poem. Worse, his good lines are almos invariably undercut by the exaggeration of his own rhetoric elsewhere But there is promise here somewhere, though its release will requir both a deeper honesty and a deeper guile than Mr. Watson's presen habits will allow. And I myself miss in addition the feel of a subjec or a subject less general than a vague sense of the good tragedy o things.

Miss Norma Farber is perhaps a maturer poet than Mr. Watson, or at least a poet whose structural unit is less the word and the line than the stanza or shorter verse-period. And this skill is reflected in her preference for the traditional formal stanza or the sonnet as well as in her mercilessly precise rhyming (and her grim off-rhyming), for any grouping, in short, that lets her make the most of her liking for tidy joinery and clipped movement. Couplet, tercet, quatrain, even sestet—wherever she can work in small compass, she gets a statement that is clearly poetry, a clean, defined and capable unit (e.g. "Time of Aster," "Look Not for Ladies in Your Women," "And Cheap at the Price"). But beyond this limit, she runs into rhetoric, if we mean by rhetoric any excess or surplusage or activity of language for which the poem cannot account; not the compulsive haymakers of Mr. Watson, but the rhetoric that occurs when a slight perception is overplayed or developed beyond its power to match the development. Typically, Miss Farber's poems give a sense of movement, but on closer inspection, the movement seems to come more from a nice modulation of essential repetitions; there is not movement, but the illusion of it, in a dither of qualification or *exempla.* Thus in her sonnets, an initial metaphor ("Less like a sea long set in mold of land") is successively qualified ("more like a pool," "I thickened on spume"), and yet these gradations in the shift of metaphorical meaning are finally irrelevant to the poem's terminus: the original metaphor sufficed for the close and the gradations have simply sustained the necessity for movement by an illusion. In this sense her poems—the bulk of them—seem to me delaying actions, in which the final line, where the movement comes clean and sharp, perpends all the others as though an introduction. The difficulty here, though, seems to be not a hardened rhetorical

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habit, but a triviality and fixity of perception which cannot pick up power in dramatic movement and even loses power by dint of repetition. There is power in small and promise here, and genuine competence, but the promise is less frittered by big rhetorical habits than cramped between the mutual exactions of a Spartan sense of form and an overly docile and humble perceptual habit.

In Mr. Robert Pack's *The Irony of Joy*, a competent but somewhat tired first volume of poetry, I sense the pressure of revolt against the contorted wildness of modern poetic rhetoric (cf. "On the Death of Dylan Thomas" which begins, "We have imitated you enough"), and in this respect Mr. Pack is directly opposed to both Mr. Watson and Miss Isabella Gardner. What I find disturbing is not traditionalism, but a lazy preference for what is inert rhetoric and dead apparatus in past poetry. Mr. Pack's sense of metaphor, for instance, as well as much of his syntax, seems to me deeply fatigued (e.g., "summer's orchestra," "synagogue of trees," "the window of your heart," "the legends of dreamy youth" etc.); and when this limpness of language coalesces with the constant, semi-depressed lethargic elegiacs that are Mr. Pack's most obvious subject, the effect is one of drooping honesty. If the language stands at half-mast, after all, what good is all the sincerity of experience? When a poet, with obvious wilfulness and need, burrows into simplicity as Mr. Pack has done, his danger lies in the possibility of renouncing all skills for dealing with complexity, and just those skills that make it finally possible for great poets to seem almost guileless. With Mr. Pack the need for simplicity, for a form that can allow him to be direct with experience and himself, has, I think, led him to some kind of debasement of traditional form whose real rigor and complexity he characteristically refuses, except in the sestinas and villanelles where the given complexity of the form demands from him both hard work and an answering complexity of experience and language.

Of the nine poets here under review, by far the most exciting, the most mature, the most promising, is Mr. Louis Simpson, whose *Good News of Death* deserved independent publication and whose excellence sits uncomfortably beside the mere competence of Mr. Pack and Miss Farber. Like both of those poets, Mr. Simpson is also deeply traditionalist in his temptations, and he is also a considerable rhetorician; but unlike them, he has a depth of experience and an appetite for complexity which exactly match the form he works in; and if he is a rhetorician, he is also a near master of rhetoric, firmly forcing his language's urgency and gesture into the controlling shape of his poem's experience. And, most important, he is a mature poet with a driving theme constantly thrown up in new developments and newly involved with the experience of each new poem. The lovely opening

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poem, "The True Weather For Women," for instance, is a deeply traditional poem and especially in its striking dependence upon Wyatt's "They Flee From Me" (visible in the hovering, limping rhymes, the imagery and the movement), but not a merely traditionalizing poem; for look at the remarkable poem "The Islanders," or "Ulysses and the Sirens," and one can see that what is traditional here is also deeply personal mythology, all of it coming to terms dramatically with the ancient but unembarrassed theme of the tragic simultaneity of experience, the simultaneity made possible in the oldest poetic way: perception under pressure, with concern, pity, wit and passion for the common condition. If he begins with rhetoric, he begins with good rhetoric, nothing usurping the destined motion of the poem:

Poetry has no place, still you must choose
A starting point—say, with the displaced Jews
Who come to this small park from the ends of earth:
They weep with sorrow and expect a birth,
Their gutturals disrupt the summer nights
While darkness slowly laps the river lights.
Their skins are wrinkled like fine handkerchiefs
Of Brussels, intricately stitched with griefs.
The wind that stirs their soft curls makes you cold
Thinking of Belsen and of Buchenwald.
Their tears obscure your Christ like candlegrease—
A swinging acrobat, no Prince of Peace!
Cry thief! Someone has stolen the true Cross!
Go to these Jews, accuse them of your loss!

And so it goes, the next stanza beginning from what has been gained,

Poetry has no place, but life is kind.
Revenge yourself on a girl—she will not mind

and on and on, the rhetoric turning first to easy irony, then sinister, then personal, then to a fine general flourish with the lines spun out long in five and six stresses and turning ironically anticlimactic at the close in heroic couplets (tacked onto stress-lines!), and closing on what all this rhetoric makes simple and right:

Enough of these images—they set the teeth on edge!
Life, if you like, is a metaphor of death—
The difference is you, a place for the passing of breath.
That is what man is. He is the time between,
The palpable glass through which all things are seen.
Nothing. Silence. A syllable. A word.
Everything.
After your death this poem occurred.
You were the honored fragments from the Greek.
After your death these stones would move and speak.

The central word for Mr. Simpson's poetry seems to me "dramatic"; what "dramatic" involves here in subject is the interplay of past and present in a context of particular doing or passion; it is dramatic

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because it is complex, because it moves unmistakably from the unknown to the known and then, confronting what is known with what cannot be known, ends where it should, on a tragic frontier. No *aperçu*, that is, is final; an *aperçu* may resolve the particular poem, tame it to rest, but the *aperçu* becomes dramatic because it is related to that part of experience where perception becomes choice and fate. So, in Mr. Simpson's lyrics, the resolution *par excellence* is death, but that resolution is made complex and ironic by the human claim to significant passion in the interim that is everything. Technically, the dramatic element lies chiefly in Mr. Simpson's rhetorical control: his sure knowledge of juxtapositions, the deeply, almost embarrassingly traditional *sententia* offset by a happy irony or gruffly familiar and deliberately contrived *contretemps*; the varied measured climb of his rhetoric to the peak where direct statement becomes simplicity and relief; the motion of statement, almost never with repetition, but with force increased by steady enlargement of perception; and the remarkable impression of power diffused over a poem, not concentrated in a single line, but in the sustaining of statement that line by line looks almost flat, but taken as a whole strikes hard and tellingly. The dangers are apposite to the skills—danger of understatement for effect, coming down too hard on the core, anticlimax, and occasionally an unnecessary spinning-out of the obvious. His love lyrics are extraordinarily effective, but too many of them ("Love, That Wears the Moonlight Out," "Song," "As Birds Are Fitted to the Bough") are too close to their Elizabethan models to convince one's feeling of them as lyric poems in their own right: they are almost too good. But this is a remarkable talent, and one, unless I am mistaken, exactly suited by temperament and skill to show us how verse-drama might really be written, for Mr. Simpson's real ability is *dramatic* verse, and yet his lyric abilities are good enough that they promise to support, without usurping, his dramatic sense.

With Isabella Gardner's *Birthdays from the Ocean*, we come round to rhetoric again, a more tactful rhetoric than Mr. Watson's and with greater structural skills than Miss Farber's, but a bouncy, compulsive rhetoric in the familiar Welsh livery of the Life-Force (Miss Gardner has the standard homage to Dylan Thomas, this time as Wizard Merlin with Miss Gardner cast as "an apprentice witch"). On the whole, it is an amiable poetry, pert, brisk and wilfully bent upon the look of childlike surprise; a discrimination for words and their sounds, a nice sense of timing and a lot of pleasant pumping at getting the feel of startled life into language. It is also a strikingly limited poetry, deeply impersonal for all its air of being about "I," and so overwhelmingly and singlemindedly devoted to making life leap full-blown from death and routine that it makes a monotony of its own, as though these poems were written from a standard life-ritual by a Bacchante backsliding into sympathetic magic. I wish this were less parody than se-

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rious, for Miss Gardner seems to me to have a tact with words and a niceness of enthusiasm which deserve better; but they also deserve better experiences and better poems than these perpetual lyric *Evohes* on behalf of Spring, rain, the heightened senses of childhood, true feeling and fresh passion. It may be that the Life-Force itself deserves better than Miss Gardner can make, and certainly more is required than the lament for phoenixes and unicorns and the ritual prayer that "giraffes will wink and zebras prink and spring come on forever," the assertion that the laurels have *not* been cut down, or the repeated hope that "bud will leaf again, that choice bird sing, and paper boats sail down the robin days." But I doubt that the Life-Force is, except in certain instances (Dylan Thomas and now Jean Garrigue), a subject apart from its applications, and even Thomas could not always succeed in mooring it to particulars. Miss Gardner's particulars seem to me to be typically impoverished, and most of the time she writes about ideas, without history, without conveying the sense of personal identity, and even without the sense of *otherness*, so that her particulars are almost impossibly stripped of the context they require to carry their burden. Which is to say that the poet's observation here is less observation than a kind of telepathic imperative to something to grow and live, or else a cuteness of strong language ("O love you, fierce-heart"—and this to Thoreau of all people) cut off from the context of the real thing and coming merely from Miss Gardner. What, in short, is bad about Miss Gardner's poetry is its infection from the fashionable explanation of Dylan Thomas' power and the contagion of a prestige that Thomas' subject borrowed from his conduct as much as from his poetry. When Miss Gardner is not riding attendant witch upon her Merlin, she is capable of good poetry ("Abraham and Isaac," "In the Museum," "Cock A' Hoop") and makes a claim for attention in her own right.

I could make very little headway in understanding Mr. John Ashbery's *Some Trees*, the latest volume in the Yale younger poets series, and I take some comfort from what I take to be Auden's similar difficulties in the Introduction. Whether Mr. Ashbery is, as Auden suggests, in the tradition of Rimbaud and bent upon a new rhetoric, I cannot say for sure; but Rimbaud is here complicated by Stevens at his most opaque whimsical, and, whether or not there is a new rhetoric, Mr. Ashbery certainly strangles any normal rhetoric or syntax of English poetry. At least apart from two or three poems in the customary idiom of English poetic communication, I have no idea most of the time what Mr. Ashbery is talking about or being, beyond the communication of an intolerable vagueness that looks as if it was meant for precision. What does come through is an impression of an impossibly fractured brittle private world, depersonalized and discontinuous, whose characteristic emotional gesture is an effete and cerebral whimsy. ("He is sherrier/ and sherriest./ A tall thermometer/

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Reflects him best.") Of the poems I can claim to understand ("The Instruction Manual," "The Mythological Poet," "Illustration"), I can report a good, though dry, ear, a nice discrimination with language, and a sensibility typically concerned with the liens between public and private, though the liens are normally the more tenuous ones of nostalgia, regret, loneliness, and a half-spoofing whimsical sense of not belonging. Whether these skills are sufficient to sponsor the devotion necessary to tracking Mr. Ashbery into his private lair, I doubt; my own patience at least wore out after several weeks of trying.

My over-all impression of Mr. Donald Hall's *Exiles and Marriages* is one of a general level of competence so high that it almost obscures the fact that this volume contains an alarmingly high percentage of poetic odd-jobs and merely fashionable exercises. The knack of verse he certainly has, a knack particularly conspicuous in his professional handling of line and rhyme and the impression of good competence everywhere well sustained. His given form is, like Simpson's, the traditional verse period, aided by a clever and inventive ear; but Mr. Hall nowhere experiments or takes risks with his form, being evidently content to work with the given, except for a little artful roughening here and there and an adroit use of part-lines. The result is a compact tidiness of feeling, with the deliberate tracing of rough edges to indicate an illusion of passion (passion seems to me almost completely absent); there is a mellowness of statement, putative and gently aphoristic, though at times the mellowness becomes almost as mechanical as the form; and there is a calmness and smoothness coming close to blandness in both form and statement, as though Mr. Hall were an old man, in deep control of dead experience, and nowhere capable of surprise. But he writes well, and if we recognize the Yeats or Auden who give him a form that is not his own or a wisdom before his time, this does not annul the sense of talent or put him outside promise. There is both promise and professional competence in poetry like this:

> *No man can knock his human fist upon*
> *The door built by his mind, or hear the voice*
> *He meditated come again if gone;*
> *We live outside the country of our choice.*
> *Leaning toward harvest, fullness as our end,*
> *Our habits will not mend.*
> *Our humanness betrays us to the cage*
> *Within whose limits each is free to walk,*
> *But where no man can hear our prayers or rage,*
> *And none of us can break the walls to talk.*

Opposed to the promise, I think, is Mr. Hall's own penchant for a professionalism that is so smooth at times that it comes close to dishonesty or to competent hackwork (see the lazy, attitudinizing elegy called "An Elegy for Wesley Wells," or the empty competence of "Carol," or the trite artificiality of "Epigenethlion"). This professionalism

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is further troubled by a kind of gentlemanliness and well-bred manner izing whose difficulties are not that they are poses but that Mr. Hal cannot shake much poetry out of them: most of what Mr. Hall's gentle manliness comes to is a sort of social kindliness and solid decency and even a cloying muffling softness with ideas and passions. The softness with ideas is particularly noticeable, and accounts, I think, for the blurring effect of some of his less earned *sententiae*; intellectual rigor and power are, even less than passion, a part of Mr. Hall's initial poetic gifts. And lacking these, or failing to develop them, he turns quite naturally to the perfection of his human skills, or those human skills which are best earned in the gentler regions of social life—compassion, fellow-feeling, friendliness, regret, grace in growing old and staying young. These gentler and humbler skills are, it is true, not altogether accepted by Mr. Hall, who now and again announces his intention to have a *Sturm und Drang* and give the bastinado with his tongue; but as yet this is only a fetching braggadocio from a poet with a domesticated Muse. At the moment, Mr. Hall's apparent subject is less a subject than a habitual attitude, but this attitude is in striking harmony with his chosen form; if there is to be development, it will need to come in taking a purchase in greater risk of strong feeling and beginning from formal scratch anew. In the meantime, Mr. Hall's competence makes an entertaining and handsome first book.

Mr. Edwin Honig's *The Moral Circus* is all risk, cleanly taken, a series of fine dives from the high board into the deep end of the pool. The stance is appropriately nervous and uncertain; the poems jerky in perception, with large gaps and silences indicating the fashionable omission of formal rhetoric; but the omissions are not merely fashionable, and Mr. Honig's textural gaps show that he is almost alone among these poets in using his silences instructively as an integral part of his movement (see, especially, "Elegy"). He has a firm lyrical movement (finest in "Lease and Loss" and "First Morning," but botched with bad rhetoric in "Thirtieth Year") and a discriminating, if somewhat contorted and difficult, diction. The perception is frequently honed down to a point where it cuts too fast to work and sometimes even too fast to do anything but confuse (e.g. "Do You Love Me"); where it does work (as in the final line of "Quest"), his poetry comes on real power. At its worst, Mr. Honig's poetry is deeply modish, not the modishness of fashionable dishonesty, but the overmuscled, nervous tic-ridden modishness of inarticulate desperation. Mr. Honig, that is, sometimes gives the impression of distrusting simplicity so much that he seems to force a fairly simple perception to produce a crop of acceptable oddities. And this distrust combined with his own uneasy stance (his best poems are typically those in which he adopts a persona not his own, e.g. "Hamlet," "Corrida") makes for a self-consciousness and nervousness in the handling of ordinary ex-

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perience that gets into the verse as outright difficulty and chooses by preference extreme experience—intense isolation, loss, the fear and terror of unreality. But it is an honest poetry, with no fear of ideas, in search of possible commitment; if Mr. Honig can find himself a stance and a subject, his technical skills should make him an exciting poet.

The Deaths at Paragon, Indiana shows Mr. John Woods as an accomplished poet of restricted range, quite at home in his chosen idiom and getting real power out of his obsessive single theme—death and life, the deaths of junkmen, aunts, youth, first love, the night constable's sweetheart, and Mr. Kriner. The idiom is one of the most austere I have ever met, adamantly anti-literary, without allusions to any countryside but what this modern pastoral of Indiana can generate, almost anti-rhetorical: its characteristic motion is through a steady succession of flat understatement, neat, restrained, almost leached of color or gesture, coming close to monotony, and then closing on a sudden leap which quite transfigures the preceding crawl of the language. It is very much a world of the commonplace—folksy, cluttered with things, rusted Chevvies, Grant Street, the junkman's shed—and the intent of the poetry is very clearly the commonplace transfigured, as when the broken boatman by the juke box, on his uppers, suddenly seeing a stork, looms big in the bigness of his language:

O let me widen into nothing.
I'm king of all I see. I'm king
Of all the lovely visibles.

Or as when an autumn park suddenly reaches out for the world:

But no one loves. No one can meet.
Rain walks off. The bathers go.
There goes the weather, crowding the street.
The water stiffens. Here comes the snow.

Where Mr. Woods sticks to this technique of transfiguring a world his studied dryness and bareness have put in need of a sudden blow, he writes poetry of a very high order, and after Mr. Simpson, he is easily the most promising of the nine poets under review. But if the last section of the book represents his later work, I think it fair to say that Mr. Woods' new rhetoric is an unfortunate attempt to break loose from the anti-rhetorical manner of most of his poetry. At least, it seems to me that the earlier suspicion of rhetoric visible in his austere lines gets carried over into these poems ("Insurrection in the Seed," "Birth Day," "Flames Are In The Leaves") as an uneasy ebullience, too wilfully lyric as though Mr. Woods were determined to hymn the life-god of Miss Gardner in compensation for so much death. As yet this new ebullience looks to my eye both mannered and false. But it is a part of Mr. Woods' promise that his poetry takes a direction rather than resting where it wrote safely and well, and it may even be the crucial part of promise, after we do homage to talent.

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NORTHROP FRYE

Graves, Gods and Scholars

THE TROUBLE WITH being a literary critic is that one gets filing cards in the memory, and one is continually having to fish them out and wonder if the clichés typed on them are really so very bright. I imagine a good many people roughly familiar with modern poetry have some sort of card in their memories reading in effect: "Graves, Robert. Does tight, epigrammatic lyrics in the Hardy-Housman tradition; closer in technique to Blunden and de la Mare than to Eliot, Pound or Yeats; a minor poet but one of the best of the post-Georgians." There is some factual basis for such a note, but in terms of "covering" its subject it would hardly make an honest woman of Lady Godiva. Whatever one thinks of Mr. Graves as a poet, novelist, critic, translator, mythographer, editor, anthologist, collaborator, surveyor of modernist poetry or restorer of the Nazarene gospel, there can be no reasonable doubt that Mr. Graves is big, and bigness is certainly one important attribute of greatness. He is not a minor poet; he is not a minor anything.

Of all evidences of bigness, one of the most impressive is a sense of the expendable. The present volume[1] is as much selected as collected poems: Mr. Graves has written many fine poems that are not here, which indicates, not only that he is highly self-critical, but that he believes that the poet always knows what his essential poems are. I have some reservations about this latter view, but on the other hand every poet has the right to his own canon, and it is as an author's canon that the present collection should be read.

Lyrical poetry normally begins in an associative process in which sound is as important as sense, a process much of which is submerged below consciousness. Such a process may go in either of two directions. It may become oracular, ambiguous in sense and echoic in sound, in which case it is addressed in part to an uncritical faculty, concerned with casting a spell and demanding emotional surrender. Or it may become witty, addressing itself to the critical intelligence and the detached consciousness. The ingredients of paronomasia and assonance are common to both, and it depends on the context whether, for instance, Poe's line "The viol, the violet and the vine" or Pope's "Great Cibber's brazen, brainless brothers stand" is oracular or witty.

Mr. Graves is an epigrammatic writer who remains in full intellectual control of his work. The meaning of his poem never gets away from him, never dissolves in a drowsy charm of sound. He is a poet to whom theme means a good deal: every poem is aimed directly at a

1 COLLECTED POEMS 1955, by *Robert Graves*. Doubleday. $4.50.

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definite human or mythical situation, and usually hits it squarely in its central paradox. The technique corresponds. In the earlier pages one watches him practising forms with a sharp rhythmical bite: Mother Goose rhythms, ballads and eight-six quatrains, and, in the fine "In Procession," Skeltonics reminding us how much Mr. Graves has done to rehabilitate Skelton. The deep incision produced by exact metre and clear thought makes some unforgettably sharp outlines:

Courtesies of good-morning and good-evening
From rustic lips fail as the town encroaches:
Soon nothing passes but the cold quick stare
Of eyes that see ghosts, yet too many for fear.

Later in the book we get more unrhymed poems, where the metrical and mental discipline have to stand alone, and finally, in the poems that come from or are contemporary with *The White Goddess*, incantation itself. But as the poet has approached incantation from the opposite end, his enchanters speak in a curiously reasonable and expository voice. Thus the Sirens urge Cronos:

Compared with this, what are the plains
Of Elis, where you ruled as king?
A wilderness indeed.

The poetic personality revealed in the book is one of sturdy independence, pragmatic common sense and a consistently quizzical attitude to systematized forms of experience, especially the religious. From this point of view Mr. Graves's collected poems could hardly have come at a better time. We have had a good deal of ecclesiasticized poetry, full of the dilemma of modern man, Kierkegaardian *Angst*, and the facile resonance of the penitential mood. Mr. Graves is strongly in revolt against all this, and he is old enough to have the authority of a contemporary classic, carrying on a tradition that goes back to the nineteenth century through Henley and Housman; a tradition that has more in common with Clough than with Arnold. He writes not humbly but defiantly of "Self-Praise," and says:

Confess, creatures, how sulkily ourselves
We hiss with doom, fuel of a sodden age—
Not rapt up roaring to the chimney stack
On incandescent clouds of spirit or rage.

He is occasionally betrayed into cliché on this point, as in "Ogres and Pygmies," but the sense of candor and freshness remains the primary one.

Mr. Graves is becoming an influence on contemporary British poetry in such a way as to suggest that we may be ready to repeat, on a very small scale of decades rather than millennia, Yeats's pattern of progress from Christian humility to the tragic pride of Oedipus the riddle-guesser. Certainly no one can doubt that Mr. Graves is by far the greatest riddle-guesser of our time: all the Gordian knots of antiquity, from the song of the sirens to the number of Antichrist, fall

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to pieces at the swing of his sword. Readers who are still bemused by the oracular, still accustomed to think of poetry as Lenten reading and of the poet as a psychopomp, may put their hands confidingly into Mr. Graves's with the hope of being led, like Prufrock, to some overwhelming question, perhaps even an answer. And as they proceed, whether through this book or through the formidable series of mythological works, a central myth begins to take shape. This, of course, is the myth of the White Goddess, the mother-harlot, virgin-slut, "Sister of the mirage and echo," whose elusive and treacherous beauty has inspired poets from prehistoric times to the last whimpers of Courtly Love in Baudelaire. "It is a poet's privilege and fate" to fall in hopeless love with her: condemned by his genius to go on trying to screw the inscrutable, he must stumble groaningly around the four seasons of her adoration, from the rapture of spring to the reviling of winter:

But we are gifted, even in November
Rawest of seasons, with so huge a sense
Of her nakedly worn magnificence
We forget cruelty and past betrayal,
Heedless of where the next bright bolt may fall.

That's it, then: "There is one story and one story only." The key to all myths, the answer to all riddles, the source of all great poems, is the story of Attis and Cybele, where a feminine principle remains enthroned and a masculine one follows the cycle of nature, a Lord of the May who is soon "dethroned," and turned into a doomed victim like Actaeon, while the poet urges:

Run, though you hope for nothing: to stay your foot
Would be ingratitude, a sour denial
That the life she bestowed was sweet.

The Attis-Cybele story is very important in mythology; it underlies a vast number of poems; its ramifications are nearly as widespread as those of poetry itself. All this no one would wish to deny. One feels nevertheless that there is something dismally corny about isolating the myth in this way and in this form; something of rotten-ripe late Romanticism; something that suggests the masochism of Swinburne or some of the worst effects of Maud Gonne on Yeats rather than anything typical of Mr. Graves. So we go back and run through his book again.

We notice that the central theme of a relatively early poem, "Warning to Children," is that of the boxes of Silenus, the image with which Rabelais begins. In the next poem, a most important poem called "Alice," we read:

Nor did Victoria's golden rule extend
Beyond the glass: it came to the dead end
Where empty hearses turn about; thereafter
Begins that lubberland of dream and laughter,
The red-and-white-flower-spangled hedge, the grass

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Where Apuleius pastured his Gold Ass,
Where young Gargantua made whole holiday . . .

We begin to wonder if perhaps Mr. Graves does not after all belong, not to the solemnly systematic mythographers, not to the tradition of Apollodorus and Natalis Comes and George Eliot's Casaubon, but to the tradition of the writers who have turned mythical erudition into satire, to Rabelais and Apuleius, or to the exuberantly hyperbolic Celtic mythical poets. The combination of erudite satire and lyrical gifts is not uncommon: we find it in Petronius, in Heine, in Joyce, and (counting his lethal scholarly essays as erudite satire) in Housman. Perhaps Mr. Graves's oracle too is the oracle of the Holy Bottle: certainly the myths in his poetry, like the ghosts, seem to be not part of an objective system but a kaleidoscopic chaos of human fragments. As he says:

Now I know the mermaid kin
I find them bound by natural laws:
They have neither tail nor fin,
But are deadlier for that cause.

He does not lead us towards an objective or systematic mythology: he leads us towards the mythical use of poetic language, where we invent our own myths and apply them to an indefinite number of human themes. He has several doppelganger poems, in which he develops the theme of the looking-glass world as this world looked at mythically: as, in short, the world constructed by love and imagination. This is the theme of "The Climate of Thought," of "The Terraced Valley," and several other poems.

Perhaps, then, his attraction to the white goddess myth is simply that it is an ironic myth, ambiguous in its moral values, and providing in its human incarnations what is essentially a heap of broken images. In contrast, the masculine protest myths of father-gods, introduced to our culture by the prophet Ezekiel, according to *The White Goddess*, stand for order, system, and the limiting of poetic themes by artificial standards of truth and morality. In such poems as the early "Reproach," where Christ appears as an accusing father, in "The Eremites," in "The Bards," and elsewhere, we see the perversion of life that results from enthroning a male god in the sky in place of a mother. Perhaps we may understand from these poems how we are to read such a book as *Wife to Mr. Milton*: less as biography or literary criticism than as a blow struck in defence of the white goddess, and one in the eye for the prophet Ezekiel. The ambivalence of Mr. Graves's attitude to myth reminds one of Samuel Butler, whom he curiously resembles in many ways. Butler was so subtle and poker-faced an ironist that some of his parodies, such as the Book of the Machines in *Erewhon*, take in the casual reader, who is apt to assume that it's a straight Frankenstein fantasy. Others, such as *The Fair Haven*, took in nearly the whole reading public in their day. And the still others so

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very subtle that they seem to have taken in Samuel Butler himself. His account of the Resurrection, for instance, reads like a deadly parody of Victorian pseudo-rationalism going to work on the Gospel narratives, but Butler appears to have taken it seriously, as he did his notions about the *Odyssey* (some of them shared by Mr. Graves) and about Shakespeare's Sonnets. Similarly, *King Jesus* and *The Nazarene Gospel Restored* impress one primarily as mythical satire: i.e., as constructs so obviously hypothetical that they suggest an indefinite number of other possible constructs, each as ingenious and plausible as the author's—or as the orthodox version. But Mr. Graves appears to take them "seriously," as in some way definitive or exclusive. But fortunately we can dodge that issue in reading the poetry, and find the central path to his mind through something like this:

He is quick, thinking in clear images;
I am slow, thinking in broken images.

He becomes dull, trusting to his clear images;
I become sharp, mistrusting my broken images . . .

He in a new confusion of his understanding;
I in a new understanding of my confusion.

LOUIS SIMPSON

Fiction Chronicle[1]

THE FOREWORD TO Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* suggests that it "should make all of us—parents, social workers, educators—apply ourselves with still greater vigilance and vision to the task of bringing up a better generation in a better world." Perhaps, in the long run. But the immediate moral effect is not so clear. The middle-aged hero of this novel—available in France, not so easily available here—violates the mores of the United States, and the Mann Act. He obtains a nymphet—that is, a girl child of a certain kind that he finds sexually provocative, and transports her from motel to motel, crossing state lines again and again.

Humbert, the supposed author of these confessions, has no apparent shame. He enjoys his abnormality. He describes with a fierce, humorous

[1] LOLITA, by *Vladimir Nabokov*. The Olympia Press. Francs: 900. THAT UNCERTAIN FEELING, by *Kingsley Amis*. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50. KEEP THE ASPIDISTRA FLYING, by *George Orwell*. Harcourt, Brace. $3.75. THE CROSS OF IRON, by *Willi Heinrich*. Bobbs-Merrill. $4.50. THE MALEFACTORS, by *Caroline Gordon*. Harcourt, Brace. $3.95.

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vivacity the situations in which he finds himself: discovered by a stout lady and two children in the woods with Lolita, at 10,000 feet above sea level; consulted by one of Lolita's teachers who is worried about the girl's backwardness—for Humbert is, ostensibly, Lolita's stepfather, having married her mother as a means to an end. The teacher thinks he has a quaintly Old-World feeling of possessiveness, and admonishes him:

> ". . . Beardsley School does not believe in bees and blossoms, and storks and love birds, but it does believe very strongly in preparing its students for mutually satisfactory mating and successful child rearing. We feel Dolly could make excellent progress if only she would put her mind to her work."

The novel is neatly divided in two volumes. The first is climaxed by Humbert's seduction of, or seduction by, the nymphet. The second half carries the lovers to and fro, glued together and driven on the wind, he an ardent Paolo, she an unwilling Francesca, through motor courts, hotels, national parks, to the West and back again—the middle-aged lover always on the alert for signs of suspicion in strangers, aware that Lolita does not love him, aware at last that they are being followed. And the pursuer is not a detective, nor a younger rival, but a paunchy, balding, depraved dentist of his own age. That Lolita should fall in love with this *voyeur*, Quilty, and make her escape with him, is to beat Proust's Albertine, that other nymphet, on her own ground.

Humbert finds Lolita again, at seventeen, married to a nice young man and big with child. She refuses to come back to him; instead of shooting her or her husband, Humbert searches out her real lover, the dentist Quilty. As bullet after bullet plunges into his gross body, the dentist protests: "Ah, that hurts, sir, enough! Ah, that hurts atrociously, my dear fellow. I pray you, desist." Humbert reloads and follows him upstairs to finish the job:

> "Get out, get out of here," he said coughing and spitting; and in a nightmare of wonder, I saw this blood-bespattered but still buoyant person get into his bed and wrap himself up in the chaotic bedclothes.

The passion of Humbert for Lolita is a special case. But Humbert knows this better than anyone else, and his confessions, based firmly as they are in the depths of behavior, are able to rise light-heartedly to the empyrean of farce. The condemned man eats a hearty meal. Later, it is necessary to take Lolita seriously—how seriously, is suggested in the verses Humbert reads to the dentist before killing him:

> *"Because you took advantage of a sinner*
> *Because you took advantage*
> *Because you took*
> *Because you took advantage of my disadvantage . . ."*

Originality, wit, style—yet there is more to *Lolita*. It is a joke on our national cant about Youth. If an ideal of adult Americans is the

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pubescent mind, the body that will fit snugly into a *Mademoiselle* ad, *Lolita* only carries a fantasy to its fulfillment.

The flashy scenes in Kingsley Amis' *That Uncertain Feeling*, the scenes that give immediate laughter, are farce. But whereas farce seems to be Nabokov's strength, it may be Amis' weakness. Sometimes he seems tempted to throw real life away, and it is in real life, in comedy, that the value of his fiction lies. In the middle of the story, the hero, John Lewis, with a wife and kids at home, has been at last finessed by the other woman into a compromising situation. Her husband's car is heard coming up the drive:

> "For God's sake don't look as if you're going to be shot, and stop that awful panting. Here." She picked up a massively embossed cigarette box and scattered its contents, twenty or thirty cigarettes, on the floor. "The moment anyone comes up here start picking these up. You can pant as much as you like after that."

This is comedy. But the sequence, however funny, is straight out of French bedroom theater. Although her husband is a tolerant man, John Lewis tries to conceal himself; then he impersonates a plumber; then disguises himself in a "traditional Welshwoman's dress," which he finds in a wardrobe of costumes. On the bus home, an old lady penetrates his disguise:

> ". . . Ashamed you should be. And may I ask where you've been, dressed up like that?"
>
> "I've only been to a party."
>
> "A party, is it? Treating your national costume as a fancy dress. It's a disgrace indeed." With a violent movement she turned her head and shoulders away from me.
>
> "But I played my harp there," I chirped . . .

A good answer, but a little more of this and we would be in the played-out world of Jeeves and Bertie Wooster. On the other hand, the comic scenes—Lewis being examined by a board of Welshmen as to his fitness for promotion; a reading by an eminent Welsh poet—are true as well as funny. The Welsh poet is handled, as it were, with tongs, like an owl that has died in the chimney.

That Uncertain Feeling might be used to illustrate a maxim by La Rochefoucauld, exposing the self-deceptions of vanity. John Lewis, a librarian in a small Welsh town, is competing for a better job which will lift his family a little way out of the lower-middle-class welter in which they live. He meets an attractive and wealthy woman, Elizabeth, who intends to have him; her husband, as it turns out, has some influence on the examining board which will decide Lewis' future. When he finally becomes her lover, Lewis learns that the examination was only a farce; Elizabeth's husband has seen to it that he will have the position. He remembers that he has principles; in a country devoted to Socialist ideals, he cannot be party to a swindle. He tells Elizabeth so.

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She immediately sees his scruple as an evasion, a statement of his indifference to her. It is, actually, more than that—the symptom of his inability to be responsible for his feelings. After Elizabeth has tried to kill herself, and his wife has given him hell, Lewis decides to take a job elsewhere at a lower salary, and to overcome temptation by walking away from it.

"A new comedy of marital misbehavior" reads the jacket. Not quite. For, first of all, this hero is pickled in vinegar; he belongs in the lower-middle-class of the spirit, whatever his income. Highly educated, but not at one of the better colleges, he is both drawn toward, and repelled by, the cocktail and beach-party crowd. He will never fit in. One of Elizabeth's friends has a friend who puts it:

> ". . . Bill Evans is rather a good chap, you see. And if you don't mind my saying so, I'm not very much of the same opinion about you. Quite the contrary, in fact. Sorry to have to mention it."

For the ancestor of John Lewis, one must go straight back to Tom Jones, skipping all English comic fiction in between. Amis' hero is an average sensual man in Tom Jones' way; he is tossed among circumstances; he is seduced—and yet, he cannot help thinking that he has principles, and this weakness only increases his difficulties.

Leslie Fiedler has pointed out that American readers will recognize scenes and characters in *That Uncertain Feeling* that seem—and this is something new in English fiction—strikingly familiar. Whether this is the result of the destruction of English social strata, or of the importation of American manners and fiction, John Lewis' central problem is indeed one with which we are familiar—an unlimited imagination, a limited income. He lives as we live; his walk-up apartment is Americanized:

> Apart from clothes, adult and juvenile, male and female, ironed, newly washed, and fit to be washed, there were a half-eaten, browning apple, several broken biscuits, a plastic doll, the torso of a rubber doll, some children's books with pictures of clothed animals on the covers, a cup, a card of blue safety pins, an orange with one of my pencils stuck into it, a bottle of cod-liver oil, a pair of plastic pants, a lot of string unwound from a ball, a can of powder, a spoon, a wooden locomotive, some diapers in various states, the defaced cover of my *Astounding Science Fiction*, and a lot of other things.
>
> "Well, hullo," Jean said.

Beside this, the most carefully researched scenes of Zola, Dreiser, Farrell, are less appalling—for there men fail or die, but Lewis' apartment is where men manage to live; it is where we sit to read Zola, Dreiser, Farrell, with their drunkards and prostitutes and failures. It is, in the United Kingdom or the U.S.A., a successful world, even in terms of personal ethics—outside, the angels are weeping, or laughing . . . it's hard to tell which.

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Significantly, the hero of Orwell's *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, like John Lewis, is employed around books: he works in a London bookshop. The time is before World War II. As Gordon Comstock, "last member of the Comstock family, aged twenty-nine and rather moth-eaten already" looks out from the shop, he confronts a hoarding covered with posters:

> A gallery of monstrous doll-faces—pink vacuous faces, full of goofy optimism. Q. T. Sauce Trusweet Breakfast Crisps ("Kiddies clamour for their Breakfast Crisps"), Kangaroo Burgundy, Vitamilt Chocolate, Bovex. Of them all, the Bovex one oppressed Gordon the most. A spectacled rat-faced clerk, with patent-leather hair, sitting at a cafe table grinning over a white mug of Bovex. "Corner Table enjoys his meal with Bovex," the legend ran.

As he looks around, Gordon Comstock pieces together lines for a poem about the dreariness of the lower-middle-class life, the clerk's hopes and terrors. He is also working on a long poem called *London Pleasures*, which will never be finished. He is obsessed with the power of money. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not money, I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymball"—so he adapts First Corinthians. Of course, he could have a better job if he wanted it, writing advertising copy—but then, he'd have to be a gentleman. (Compare with the dilemma of Amis' hero—the novels seem to move in and out of each other.) If you cannot get money, he reasons, perhaps the way to beat the money racket is to give it up altogether—escape from the clerk's hell by sinking downward. He chucks this job, which has managed to keep him looking respectable, though never well fed, and goes to work for a bookseller "in the desolate stretch of road south of Waterloo Bridge." He lives in a slum:

> Under ground, under ground! Down in the safe soft womb of earth, where there is no getting of jobs or losing of jobs, no relatives or friends to plague you, no hope, fear, ambition, honour, duty—no *duns* of any kind. That was where he wished to be.

Only a few shillings less a week, but he has crossed a line. He is running down. It no longer seems worthwhile to try; and soon he cannot try, for want of nourishment. From this hole, deepening into a grave, he is rescued by his girl, Rosemary, who visits him in his miserable bed and becomes pregnant. When Gordon realizes that they are going to have a child, a warm sense of responsibility rises up and animates him. They will get married. He throws away his unfinished *London Pleasures*, and with it his artistic ambitions. He will work at advertising copy or anything else. In his window he will keep and care for an aspidistra, the rubbery plant that is the symbol of respectability.

This may be the best book Orwell wrote. Here the vision of lower depths which pervades *Down and Out in Paris and London*, is put to use. The nightmare terrors of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are made relevant to our own everyday lives. But more than this, there is fiction for its

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own sake. I do not know of anything better in its way than the account of the expedition made by Gordon and Rosemary, their day in the country. The weather lures them on and they get lost. They find an eating place at last; it is, of course, too expensive—but it's too late to back out:

> It was exactly like an aquarium. It was built entirely of greenish glass, and it was so damp and chilly that you could almost have fancied yourself under water. You could both see and smell the river outside. . . . The beef and salad were corpse-cold and did not seem like real food at all. They tasted like water. The rolls, also, though stale, were damp. The reedy Thames water seemed to have got into everything.

Yet—and this is where Orwell's unflagging honesty pays off—these poor lovers generate a warmth between them which, because we have descended with them all the way, we too are able to enjoy:

> And at this moment the sun burst out again and the dreary aquarium was flooded with pleasant greenish light. Gordon and Rosemary felt suddenly warm and happy. . . . Over their glasses their eyes met. She was looking at him with a sort of yielding irony. "I'm your mistress," her eyes said; "what a joke!". . . . There was deep intimacy between them. They could have sat there for hours, just looking at one another and talking of trivial things that had meanings for them and for nobody else.

Rosemary is unique as a created character in Orwell's fiction. Gordon we know only too well—he is an Orwell without Orwell's talent. But Rosemary, in her mousey but tenacious femininity, and above all, in the absolutely uncalculating quality of her affection, shows that Orwell had a great potential where a novelist must have it, in the love and understanding of character for its own sake. It is Rosemary, after all, who takes a chance; she is the revolutionary in the story—as is the girl in *Nineteen Eighty-four*; more revolutionary than Gordon, with his half-baked Marxism, his acerbated vision of suburban houses tumbling down under a rain of enemy bombs. Rosemary loves him just because he has been reduced to absurdity. She is, if you look at her from a conventional angle, a mouse-trap; in a larger view, the view Gordon, to his credit, is able to take, she is a pocket goddess, "*Vénus toute entière à sa proie attachée.*"

The novels of Orwell, Amis, Nabokov, do not exclude the author's personality; they are largely dependent upon it. There are always possibilities; the imagination is at work in the style itself; the story shares what magic there is in its creator's life, and does not despair. At the far extreme from this, is the so-called realistic novel, the form in which so many contemporary heavyweights have labored. Here is a closed world. Though the pretense is to show things as they are, "realism," for the most part, only shows things as they are when imagination

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is removed. The writer may be blessed with a sense of freedom, but he doesn't pass that sense on to the characters under his hand. They are illiterate, or wish to be; their intelligence is atrophied; they suffer shock upon shock; even love is a disaster. Sometimes, in publishers' jargon, you find it hard to put these novels down; they have the fascination of bad dreams. But on the other hand, once you have put them down, you are hardly likely to pick them up again.

The Cross of Iron, by Willi Heinrich, is such a book. The story of a German infantryman, Steiner, on the Russian Front, it seems to include just about everything that could have happened to the Wehrmacht in its collapse. Steiner is a people's "hero"; by choice he is not an officer; he has lost his stripes as a result of a false accusation that he has not tried to refute; he rises to leadership through sheer merit. In the general retreat with which the action opens, Steiner is left behind with a platoon. His natural superiority having been recognized, he leads his comrades through the Russian-infested forests and marshes, back to the German lines. He gets his promotion, and the novel enters its main argument, the struggle of Steiner against his commanding officer, Captain Stransky. Stransky is an opportunist, an amateur soldier with dreams of power—Hitler's personal representative, so to speak, having, as Hitler had them, a pervert named Triebig to do his dirty work. Between Stransky and Steiner, protecting Steiner, are the good officers Kiesel and Brandt, professional army men, Junkers with a heart.

It is a nice simplification of the Wehrmacht and the Third Reich, and I imagine this is the way Germans like to think of their war. The message, if any, is that the decent men, Steiner and his *landser* comrades, were victimized by the Stranskys. The comrades—at one point there are three of them, as in Remarque's novel—seem to draw Christian solace from their own courage, companionship and innocence. But Remarque was writing of 1918. Haven't we learned anything?

Beneath the simplification of Steiner versus Stransky, there is a sinking moral emptiness in Willi Heinrich's *gestalt*. On his way back to the German lines with his platoon, Steiner captures a number of Russian women in uniform. He intends to kill them. The women are spared—because of events, not because Steiner has changed his mind. In the same episode, one of Steiner's fellow-soldiers, a man to whom he has taken a dislike, rapes a Russian woman; Steiner leaves him behind, to be torn apart by the talons of the avenging furies. It is never made clear whether the author approves or disapproves of the butchering strain in his good soldier; this may be impartiality in the creation of character, but since he is evidently sympathetic to other aspects of Steiner, I'm inclined to think it just doesn't strike the author that there's anything objectionable here.

Steiner is not a hero, though the novelist seems to think he is, nor was the destruction of the German army a tragedy, as he seems to

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think it was. These two considerable errors in conception put aside, we can admire the execution of the novel. We are moved through forests, over the enormous spaces of the Eastern Front. At the end we are trapped in the factory fight with Steiner; the sustained violence of this last action is almost intolerable. Over one scene which would, indeed, be a surfeit of horrors, the curtain is drawn. After this, Steiner's death, by a stray shell, is languid. He seems to be going on vacation.

As Willi Heinrich wants a hero, so does Caroline Gordon. *The Malefactors*, among other things, makes a case for Hart Crane as Catholic. Obviously, this is a *roman à clef*, written many years after some of the events it describes. The author may have private information which is not available to the public, but to make a case for Hart Crane as Catholic on the basis of anything he published, would be a pretty tricky piece of work. The Crane of *The Malefactors* remains Caroline Gordon's Crane, and hardly anybody else's. Since this is so, I wonder that she used Crane at all, instead of inventing a character. The air of half-truth pervades other aspects of the novel. Who, one is invited to wonder, is the famous poet, dwelling in Pennsylvania, husband of the leading female part? He wrote a poem once, we are told, which revolutionized modern poetry. But *that* poet lives in London. Who is the young woman poet who, in order to get the famous poet to use his influence with a publisher, induces him to leave his wife and run away with her—and then stands revealed as the Medusa she is? That young woman is now living in Biloxi, unless I'm mistaken. You may provide your own cast of characters.

The Malefactors is, of course, a serious novel, and the literary background is only a mistake. But when we get into it, shucking the literature, we find that the most sincere perceptions, the central situations, have the air of a writers' conference. It is, I suppose, possible for a grown woman to be so determined on success as a poet that she will seduce a famous poet in order to get her verse published. But I am surprised that the author thinks this is matter for tragedy rather than comedy. The exposure of the woman poet's ambition makes the famous poet's love-affair with her seem ridiculous; he is purged not by suffering but by embarrassment, like an instructor caught with one of his students.

The novel has a heat of religiousness. This is, perhaps, beyond criticism. But a regard for truth, or what can pass for truth in fiction, is another matter. In *The Malefactors*, minor characters who have no reality start popping up toward the end as Catholics or Catholics-in-spite-of-themselves. Before we can believe in them, they have passed on into what seems a world of the author's belief. The reader is left with the feeling that he has been excluded.

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ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS

High Critics and Low

As IN ALL ceremonial undertakings—the preparation of a tea or the celebration of a mass—there are high and low forms of literary criticism. They are exemplified nicely in the two books[1] under review. Professor Spiller represents low criticism, Professor Lewis high.

The Cycle of American Literature is essentially a condensed general literary history, which discusses all American writing of note between Columbus' first letter (1493) and Faulkner's *A Fable* (1954). Naturally, a good deal of its space and energy is devoted to listing titles, assigning dates, and recording elementary biographical and bibliographical facts. This sort of work has been done elsewhere, of course, and more fully than 300 pages can hope to do it here. Still, it is convenient to have another short summary of the basic materials.

As for interpretative accents, they fall mostly on the overall patterns, or cycles; and here we come up against the fact that Professor Spiller has not seen anything either particularly clear or particularly useful in the patterns of American literary history. So far as they exist at all (and sometimes they become very dim indeed), his cycles have little to do with the individual works of literature which he discusses. They exist, as it were, for their own sake; an Eastern cycle, a National cycle, and a larger one, comprising both these smaller ones, but which I have not been able to identify at all. Professor Spiller says it is organic.

In a word, the low criticism tends to be dull but, within its limits, informative. Its interpretations have to do with traditional and sometimes superficial categories—naturalism, classicism, romanticism, symbolism, and so on. These categories are used without definition or consistency; but since they relate mostly to broad observed similarities (common subject matter is the most frequent), and have little to do with the particular qualities of specific works, their deficiencies do not greatly matter. And a reading of *The Cycle of American Literature* can do one permanent damage only if one assumes that this solemn categorizing represents in any degree the real texture of American literary experience. The insects are all here—dried, pinned, labelled, and irresistibly dead.

A very different sort of book is that of Professor Lewis; here the insects are so lively, they get in one's hair. Bright and assured, ambitious and invincibly articulate, *The American Adam* is an interpretative study of American intellectual history from 1800 to 1900. Its

[1] THE CYCLE OF AMERICAN LITERATURE, by *R. E. Spiller*. Macmillan. $4.75. THE AMERICAN ADAM, by *R. W. B. Lewis*, Univ. of Chicago Press. $5.50.

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subtitle focusses on the concepts of innocence, tragedy, and tradition, as expressed by poets and philosophers, by novelists, and (in lesser degree) by historians and theologians during the 19th century. Mr. Lewis has some rather special terminology for describing these concepts; he thinks of 19th-century Americans as carrying on a "great conversation" and distinguishes three main voices in the discussion—the party of hope, the party of memory, and the party of irony. Hope equals innocence, space, the individual, the future; memory equals guilt, time, society, the past. Irony equals—well, the party of irony includes practically anyone who took an intermediate position, or who altered positions. A certain difficulty of definition is at once apparent. After Jonathan Edwards, nobody seems to belong unequivocally to the party of memory. Walt Whitman is distinctly a man of hope; everyone else is, tacitly or explicitly, associated in some degree with the party of irony.

Something profoundly uneasy attaches to the very idea of the Great Conversation; can this notion be simply a carryover from that greatest of pseudo-intellectual gimmicks, the celebrated Syntopicon? Seriously, the trouble with the Great Conversation as a vocabulary for describing 19th-century American thought is the factitious simplicity it imposes on complex and mutable individuals. Mr. Lewis tries half-heartedly to cope with Thoreau as a voice of hope and innocence by describing *Walden* as a ritual of rebirth; and he copes with the problem of representing *Walden* by emphasizing and overemphasizing the primitivist elements in that complex and tangled book. The nineteen volumes of Thoreau's work which are not *Walden* are not mentioned. Contradictory elements in *Walden* itself (like Thoreau's interest in the ancient wisdom of India, his concern for the classics, his desire for depth and thickness of experience) are minimized; other dimensions of his thought (like dislike of philanthropy, advocacy of civil disobedience, and passion for detailed natural observation) are simply ignored. And when Thoreau, in an access of primitive sentiment, is tempted to think about eating a woodchuck raw, the thought is exaggerated into a deed, and twice adduced as evidence of Adamistic behavior.

An interpretative work is, of course, entitled to take liberties with detailed facts; aiming to chart the forest, it cannot be asked to represent the exact configuration of each individual tree. But Mr. Lewis sometimes seems aggressively creative in his approach to the patterns of intellectual history. Describing the scene in *Deerslayer* where Natty Bumppo earns his new name of "Hawkeye," our critic senses a deficiency. Cooper did not say (as he easily might have, if he had only been thinking in Mr. Lewis's terms) that Hawkeye " 'was witnessing his own birth'—or rebirth as the American Adam." But Faulkner says something of the sort about Isaac McCaslin, in *The Bear*, on a somewhat similar occasion; so the two authors are welded together with a phrase from Tocqueville, and made to say something which Cooper

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at least had no intention of saying (pp. 104-05). This is creative criticism with a vengeance. Elsewhere a sort of "dialogue" is constructed which juxtaposes within a single paragraph Oliver Wendell Holmes, Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Thomas Mann. Pastiche-work of this sort tells us more about Mr. R. W. B. Lewis than about anything else.

Actually, there is something a little artificial about all interpretations of literary eras formed around a simple two-way opposition. Whether the dichotomy happens to involve science and religion, reason and faith, freedom and tyranny, the state and the individual, or hope and memory, a two-way scheme prompts the author to radical omissions, it violently oversimplifies ideas and feelings which never exist in a pure state (and would have no literary interest if they did), and often imposes a categorical opposition where none was in fact sensed. The size of Mr. Lewis's party of irony is evidence of the stout resistance he has had to wage against an essentially unworthy scheme. And in the same way, the disappearance of the "great-conversation" gambit from the central section of his book (the discussion of prose fiction) is good evidence that his mind is really superior to the rather flashy tools it has felt called on to use.

The book of high criticism, then, draws a very thin, sharp knife across the meaty texture of the national experience, slicing things exceeding fine and according to a highly individual bias. What we get is what our critic is prepared to see, and in order to see what he wants he will look very hard indeed. What he does not want to see he is able most remarkably to overlook. A book about 19th-century American writers which does not so much as mention Irving, Lanier, Whittier, Mrs. Stowe, chattel slavery, or the Civil War; which pronounces the names of Poe, Twain, Longfellow, Howells, and Emily Dickinson only in passing, but which gives us detailed analyses of *Nick of the Woods* and *Arthur Mervyn*—clearly this is a spotlit book, where the shadows are very deep and the highlights very high.

One could, perhaps, cope more distinctly with Mr. Lewis's insights if he had given them a larger theater and worked them out more fully. But though Hawthorne and Melville provide the core of his volume, though he devotes forty pages to a discussion of their work, this discussion is oddly angled and elusive. Of *The Scarlet Letter* he analyzes only the opening scene at the penitential platform, and *Moby Dick* is represented by three paragraphs from Chapter 96, "The Try-Works." (Fuller discussions are provided of *The Marble Faun* and *Billy Budd*, though the former is admittedly a second-rate novel; the choice of emphasis is not explained.) As for the opening scene of *The Scarlet Letter*, we are told that Hester is being punished by society for a sin which has certain natural, therefore potentially innocent aspects. (Hawthorne would never have made this correlation, but Mr. Lewis, after hedging it, does.) Hester is in fact a person of hope who has stumbled

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into the world of Jonathan Edwards and must make up her mind as to ethical reality. Hence there is a choice in the book when Hester and Dimmesdale must decide whether they will flee into the forest or return to the penitential platform. But this choice is radically misrepresented in *The American Adam*. Flight into the forest is not, for Hawthorne, flight into the world of innocence; it is explicitly an acceptance of evil, for the forest is, in at least one aspect, the home of the devil himself. As for the sense in which either Hester or Dimmesdale is an innocent like Adam, it is almost as dim as the sense in which they are American. For they are terribly guilty, long before the novel starts. And their flight not only does not lead to the forest, it leads back to Europe. Indeed, little Pearl finds the novel's only resting place (this side the grave) in the bosom of the British aristocracy. Given these facts, it is hard to see how the forest is a symbol of innocence, or how Hester is a symbol of Adam, or how the whole Adam myth has any but the most tenuous relations with *The Scarlet Letter*.

Discussing a pattern of escape from society and return to it (which he sees as a consequence of Hawthorne's view that society both punishes and rewards the individual), Mr. Lewis adds a notion which seems indistinctly intended to apply to *The Scarlet Letter*. He says that the final acceptance of penitence by Hawthorne's characters is not simply an acceptance of Puritan guilt, but a "guess about experience" that under the surface of things there is a region of horror and under the region of horror a place of perfect beauty. But so far as *The Scarlet Letter* is concerned, this "place of perfect beauty" is sheer extrapolation. The theme of the novel is redemption from guilt by suffering, humility, and confession. Neither Hester Prynne nor Arthur Dimmesdale is ever shown as reaching a place of perfect beauty, or anything like it. Hester's conscience is strengthened by her acceptance of guilt, till she can venture boldly forth into the world of modern libertarian speculation; Dimmesdale's is fatally weakened by hypocritical concealment. But there is no idea that through acceptance of guilt, submission, contrition, and atonement, Hester finds anything which the most casehardened Puritan would not have expected her to find, i.e., a healthy and vigorous conscience. She puts her conscience to the test of intellectual speculation; but this speculation exists merely to test her conscience, not for its own sake or for the sake of any particular discovery. In summary, then, I believe that in putting forward three major ideas about *The Scarlet Letter*, Mr. Lewis has misrepresented the novel in four major ways. (That the book deals with an American as Adam is doubly erroneous; the forest as innocence and the place of perfect beauty are a mistake apiece.)

It would be idle to pursue the high criticism through the rest of its tangled and elusive career. But I cannot help observing that for a student with a little training in Biblical exegesis and commentary, especially of the period of the Renaissance, there is something haunt-

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ingly familiar about Mr. Lewis's approach. His book is really an essay in typology. For the 16th-century theologian, Adam was not just Adam, Josiah was not simply Josiah, nor was Enoch merely Enoch; each was a type of someone else, a precursor, an adumbration of Christ himself. So with Mr. Lewis; for him, Deerslayer and Donatello, Billy Budd and Hester Prynne, Huck Finn and Isabel Archer are all types of the American as Adam. That two of them are female and one an Italian seems not to matter. There is no reason to deny that with a careful attention to certain details and a careful ignoring of others, some very pretty cobwebs can be woven out of material of this sort. But the method is too successful altogether. Suppose we took Faust or Narcissus or Odysseus as the central figure of our study; or symbolized the party of memory by Cain, the party of hope by Abel; or offered to read American intellectual history in terms of Shem the penman and Shaun the postman. If we clipped and patched as freely as Mr. Lewis has done, I do not think we should come far short of his results, whatever our central figure.

But then most of the central figures in intellectual history turn out to be those which are central to the intellectual historian. A little skepticism about what seems an overwhelmingly important and clearly defined pattern might lead the high-flying critic to ask some interesting and difficult questions about the nature of his materials. Mr. Lewis particularly would have made a much more intelligent, though possibly a less clever, book if he had found fewer answers and asked more questions. For example, if the American male is distinctively Adam, is the American female distinctively Eve? If not, why not? Does Uncle Tom represent a black Adam as well as a black Christ—or, more generally, how did racial differences cut across or lend force to primitivistic ideas? How influential were religious cults (such as Mennonites, Hutterites, Quakers, Amish, Mormons, and Shakers) in propagating the ideal of religious simplicity, and how did this relate to an Adamite ideal? More important still, what is the relation between the ideal of Adam and that sentimental, widely-diffused, 18th-century conception of the noble savage? Granted that some knotty problems of interpretation would probably have arisen, might it not have been wise to mention the name of Jean Jacques Rousseau just once, by way of suggesting that intellectual history is not a great conversation on an assigned topic, so much as a seamless yet tangled web, the very strands of which often dissolve, are regrouped, die out, are discolored or disguised, and reappear irregularly under other aspects . . . ? Certainly this approach would lead to many hard questions; but hard questions are better for our intellectual health than easy answers.

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HERBERT GOLD

Marcel, on se fout de toi![1]

Poor boy, a genius! This batty Frenchman drives us all autobiographical.

The first time I read Proust, the summer I was discharged from the Army, I was alone in my parents' suburban house. My mother, father, and brothers had gone away. I found it vacation enough to have the house to myself, after three years of barracks and worse, and had a strict quasi-military schedule: tennis all morning, Proust all afternoon, Prospect Avenue and a hope for good hunting in the evenings.

My usual tennis partner was a physicist, a student of Dr. Oppenheimer's, with a strong serve and a very poor backhand. We talked rather little: he was relaxing from family troubles, it seemed. One day near the end of *Within a Budding Grove*, he came to sing an ascending scale of request:

"Can you lend me a towel?"

"Of course."

"How about some socks?"

"Sure, what's up?"

He was preparing me, it seems, for a more important issue. I was alone in this big house, see, and he had this girl, see. . . . Surely I would. "Do you want me to go to a movie?"

"No, I don't care if you read downstairs. I don't need the whole house."

"You can have," I said magnanimously, "all four bedrooms and two baths."

"We'll make out," he said with a certain grimness. "It'd be great if you stayed home to answer the doorbell and telephone. Those things bother me when, when. . . ."

And so I did.

The girl was almost a foot taller than my friend; she wore a blue satin dress and a smile, neither of which my friend wore; she was a mathematician and a kleptomaniac. She explained the ugliness of the dress by remarking that it was the most expensive one she could make off with, and so she felt dutybound to use it on festive occasions. I waved them up the stairs to their important celebration.

A few hours later I was still finishing *Within a Budding Grove*. That book goes on forever; I mean it's *long*. The conjunction of mathematics and physics was muffled by wall-to-wall carpeting and the buzz of my concern with literature. Then, abruptly, there came a clatter

1 JEAN SANTEUIL, by *Marcel Proust*. Ed. by *Bernard de Fallois*, trans. by *Gerard Hopkins*. Simon & Schuster. $5.95.

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at the front door: cheers, calls, greetings. I opened to a sprawl of suitcases. My mother, father, and brothers had returned a week early.

"You aren't glad to see us!" my mother cried. "I can see it by your face."

"Well, you know how it is when I'm reading. . . ." I cocked an ear for emergency sounds upstairs. The family was piling in and seemed endless, like the clowns out of a circus automobile. There was nothing for it but the facts.

I took my mother and father aside and explained. My friend came from a good family, but his life was hard, the flesh is weak, better to burn than to marry. As the bloom had not yet come off my triumphal return from the wars, they were inclined to leniency. After all, it was merely generosity on my part. "I hope you haven't been straining your eyes over that book," my mother said sternly. "Where are we all going to sleep?"

"I'll go see where they are."

In reply to my footsteps, I heard a rush and crash, and a body went hurtling down the gutter from the second floor porch. I ran to look. My friend the physicist was fleeing over the back fence through the neighbor's garden. Unfortunately this was not The Guermantes Way; I believe it was The Shapiro Way. Strange! He was alone.

I peeped into my parents' room—blue satin across a chair, a slither of underthings, a long languorous dozing in the bed. She winked at me from a pillow. "Jack got scared by all the returning," she said. "I figure I may as well get a good night's rest." Firmly attached to the bed, she turned and showed me a mountain from behind.

I shut the door respectfully before so much female solidity and reported to my parents. I explained. I made Jack a scientific hero who needed some relaxation. The war, intellectual strain, the modern world of today. "Well," commented my mother, "if he's got his Ph.D. already, I suppose it's all right. . . . But why does he have to run away like that?"

All I could think of was: "He doesn't want his mother to worry."

"I understand. To her he's still a boy."

We rearranged our sleeping and everyone but me went to bed. I continued in Proust, with the help of my Petit Larousse. The next morning I was late for breakfast, and arrived in time to find my mother and the girl in blue satin doing the dishes together. My mother told her to find a nice businessman, not an artist or a scientist, a man who wouldn't jump off second floor porches and leave her to have breakfast alone.

I learned from the girl in blue satin that women, unlike the legends about them, do not usually become hysterical unless it suits them well: usually it's the man who suffers the gratuitous willies. I learned from my mother that she had a store of tolerance available for sinners

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so long as they are outside the family. I learned from Proust that time is a snowball rolling down a hill in the stickiness of history, each moment of experience constantly being rearranged, always living and new, showing its life through change.

In support of this contribution to Proust scholarship, I offer the following warranty of my seriousness: *I read it in the original French.* The same way I read *Finnegans Wake.*

Now, some years later, comes *Jean Santeuil,* Proust's long-lost autobiographical sketchbooks, which contain in miniature so many of the themes of the great novel aborning. Largely minus the Bergson, however, and without the sighing, ambushing phrases and the crazy, dodging rightness of word. With his anguish about Dreyfus more ardent and young, his courage about his homosexuality as weak as ever, his sense of structure almost non-existent. This last remark is not a criticism unless we assume that he was already making an attempt to construct, despite his explicit remark: "Ce livre n'a jamais été fait, il a été récolté." Can we criticize a haystack for not being a novel? That's the reviewer's problem when faced by this text. The publishers tell us that it is one thing; the author tells us something else. Proust was preparing himself; that's all. Literary history gives the book a dimly scandalous importance. So, from this bit of juvenilia came a great work! Well, well, you never know. The harvested grain may be turned into either fine liquor or Wheaties.

The difficulty is that the fine liquor which was fated to follow after this particular book—watered as it is with derivations, pretense, mere journalism, inability to face events or sustain a narrative—can be known only ad hoc, after the incontestable presence of the masterpiece. Proust is not to be blamed; after all, he did not choose to publish these "balbutiements," these stammerings, as André Maurois refers to them in a preface which manages to be both time-serving and shame-faced. The worst crime with which one can tax Proust himself is that French savingness which led him to keep the scraps. Once they had served his purpose, he should have put them out of the way of the birddogs.

One common defense of such publications should be disposed of directly. It is usually expressed this way: A great artist's preparations for a great work have their own special charm and vitality. Don't we treasure the painter's sketches? Yes? Answer: Yes. But a sketch, however casual and tentative, is a completed effort; it is most often one of a series, each of which attempts to work toward a rapid, almost instinctive response to the subject. A writer's notes and primitive drafts are not sketches, however. Verbal art poses exceptional problems of synthesis, understanding, and communication. While we may learn about the author's intentions from them, as we learn from all the facts of his autobiography, these painful accumulations, initiations, freeings, re-

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turns rarely give the lesser but sometimes powerful and *distinct* pleasure of a sketch.

My objection is not to making this work available to scholars. The injustice consists in doctoring, arranging, tidying, prettifying—making things more difficult for the dedicated student—and then unloading the factitious product on the public as "an early novel . . . a masterpiece. . . ." If Proust had stopped with *Jean Santeuil*, Claude Mauriac writes in *Marcel Proust Par Lui-Même*, "At most one might have recognized in him (if he were to decide to write in a more serious, consequential way) a follower of Bourget, a man of letters of the sort that he would satirize later. . . ."

Jacques Barzun, however, who urges his followers in The Reader's Subscription, Inc., to select this book, states another view. He defends the falsifying of the text by worrying about "this other, scholarly presentation, surely, which would address the 'confirmed Proustian' and which might well put the layman off the 'real novel.' . . . Who but a Jamesian can read the Notebooks?" In other words, the crude Proust, unrefined by scholar and translator, might discourage some hypothetical reader swimming helplessly between the Scylla of Proustophilia and the Charybdis of Proustophobia; we can rescue him by serving a savant pudding, as Henry James might have been saved from oblivion if only F. O. Matthiessen had had the courage to rearrange his notebooks and call them a novel. Q.E.D. Somerset Maugham should have done the editing, as he has done for Balzac, Dickens, and other dead, helpless novelists.

"I rejoice," says Mr. Barzun, hotly ironic, going on to offer a definition of the novel which is more than diluted; it is contemptuous; it explains complacency with the stylish and the just plain dull; it is the word of a man who has either never gotten the sense of passionate mystery which the great novelists give us, or has shared in that mystery but has been so busy talking about manners and morals in the novel that he has forgotten it:

> The novel is a modern bourgeois diversion which satisfies two or three rather low motives—curiosity (how the other half lives and works, the truth of the gossip about intimacies and private thoughts); snobbery (what the really best people will do and feel); and pedantry (this actually happened and to prove it I'll choke you with details).

Diversion for diversion, then, one scrapbook is about as good as another. No movement of plot, no sense of significant action, no mastery of the terms of life on earth—it's all peekaboo. Here is a paradox: the social critic flies round and round in ever-narrowing circles until he finally disappears up his own aestheticism.

All this apart, *Jean Santeuil* really does remind us of *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*. Of course, Proust had not yet found his true subject, his sleepytime rocking and dreaming, the passage backward and for-

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ward in time. In this text he is still exorcising a most precious sentimentality, mediated by the authors he admired, his self-pity intact and made still more hard to take by a coy, delicious, wispy, tricky. . . . Really, he meets nothing straight but the scenery. And it takes no moral courage to describe a field, a tree, or a flower. Yes, there are some intelligent journalistic observations and some nice phrases. There are even some events. But hah! we say. So this is what became of the little theme from the sonata by Vinteuil! So this thing will be Robert St.-Loup! Fascinated, archeologists all, we sherlock through to the end.

As to the book's chief characters, we discover that Jack is now a considerable young physicist, never hurt by loyalty investigations and still loyal to his mother; the girl has vanished completely into the Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Satin Bleu; and, after ten years, my tennis suffers the distraction of my kids constantly running out on the court. Swann mourns in vain, Robert glitters and Charlus leers, Albertine is dead dead dead, and Moi-Je suffers under historians, critics, editors, revivalists, translators, and book clubs. *Jean Santeuil*, an important instance of the mean profiteering on genius, is a text which should be read only after the *Recherche*, and then in a critical edition, unrearranged and, if translated at all, translated with great loyalty, as this version is not.

And now for some final moralizing. To those who have not yet read Proust's great book: read it. To those who have already read it: reread it. And to those who write reviews: next time please try to think about the book under discussion, not about some lost brave kleptomaniacal mathematician in a blue satin dress, no matter how significant she might be to that master of forgetting and perverse remembering, the great digressionist monster, Marcel Proust himself.

A COMMUNICATION

Dear Sirs:

It is only recently that George McFadden's "*The Rake's Progress*: A Note on the Libretto," published in the Spring 1955 issue of *The Hudson Review*, has come to my attention. Having had the privilege of preparing a typescript of the libretto for Mr. Stravinsky's attention, I feel peculiarly authorized to make a protest against the unscholarly carelessness with which the author has failed to take note of Mr. Chester Kallman's contribution to the text.

Though the scheme of the work was largely Mr. Auden's, its execution was in equal measure his responsibility and that of Mr. Kallman.

I am authorized to state that the actual responsibility for the composition of the various scenes runs as follows:

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Act I	Scene i	first half	Auden
		second half	Kallman
	Scene ii		Auden
	Scene iii		Kallman
Act II	Scene i	first half	Kallman
		second half	Auden
	Scene ii		Kallman
	Scene iii		Auden
Act III	Scene i		Kallman
	Scene ii	beginning & end	Auden
		recitativo secco	Kallman
	Scene iii		Auden

Particularly painful was the citation and analysis as the work of Mr. Auden of lines written exclusively by Mr. Kallman. These are the passages beginning "O Nature, green unnatural mother," "The simpler the trick," and "Always the quarry," that is, more than half of the specific quotations from the *Rake* in the article.

Mr. McFadden's judgment that "the lyrics" are "of a simple and classic beauty which it would be hard to match in modern English verse" must redound as much to the credit of Mr. Kallman as to that of Mr. Auden.

In a periodical of your standing the appearance of so radically careless (though critically acute) an article is especially shocking and can serve only to mislead. I trust that the publication of this letter will undo the damage.

Yours truly,

ALAN ANSEN

Venice

[ED. NOTE: *The writer of the above letter was Mr. Auden's secretary for about five years, roughly from 1948 to 1953.*]

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